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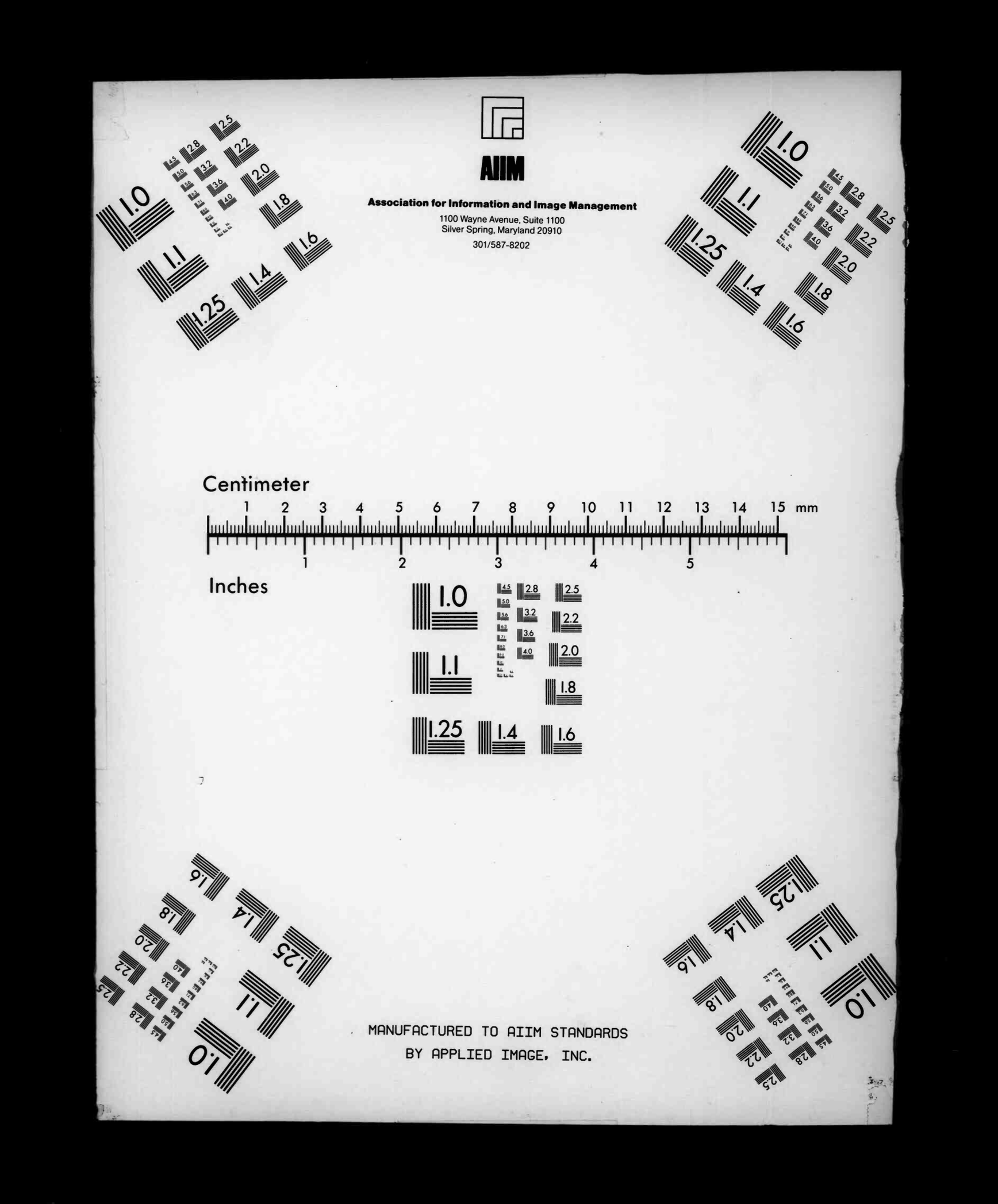
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BY

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TO

IDA AND NORMAN

PREFACE

THE idea occurred to me some years ago, while reading studies of individual poems of the minor Virgilian corpus, such as the essays of Skutsch, that this collection might possibly constitute a *Biographia Litteraria*, and that ultimately the problem of authenticity might be settled by embracing all the poems in a single study. With this principle in mind I began the work that is here presented. During the course of it I have convinced myself of the truth of what I set out by assuming, that all the poems of the group, save the anachronistic *Elegiae in Maecenatem*, stand or fall together. I am also more inclined than before to minimize the importance of stylistic and metrical studies as criteria of date or genuineness. The drift of Virgilian criticism now tends this way. Professor Tenney Frank's *Vergil, A Biography*, which has just reached me, marks a great advance in this field, as did also Professor E. K. Rand's *Young Virgil's Poetry* in *Harvard Studies*, xxx. Although we diverge sharply in many conclusions, I acknowledge my debt to both.

Certain theses have developed themselves in the course of this study: first, that Virgil's patriotism took its colour from allied sentiment of the Social War; second, that he was always a Caesarian, and, from the first sight of the lad Octavius, an Octavian, the first Augustan; third, that from the time of the Pharsalian campaign he was always a militant anti-Antonian. This means that the subject of the series of Catullan iambics was Antony.

As a critical principle in using the *Vitae Vergilianae*, I have rejected their judgements and inferences but usually admitted their facts. For example, when Suetonius says that the

Daphnis Eclogue celebrates the death of the poet's brother Flaccus, we dismiss the interpretation but accept the implied information that the brother died about this time. Again, when Suetonius says: 'Mox cum res Romanas inchoasset, offensus materia, ad Bucolica transiit', we reject his judgement as an inference from the opening lines of the Sixth Eclogue, which we are better qualified to handle than he was. Once more, when we read in the so-called Preface of Probus that Virgil's lands were assigned to sixty veterans, we accept the statement as being of a sort that the fabulous commentators did not invent. References are to Diehl's *Vitae Vergilianae*. The chapter on 'Virgil, the Romanticist', was read as a public lecture at the University of Wisconsin in April 1920, at the invitation of Professor M. S. Slaughter.

N. W. DeWitt.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Muddy Gaul	1
II.	Culex	15
III.	Rome	21
IV.	Epicurean Days	36
V.	Ciris and Catalepton IX and VII	47
VI.	Copa, Moretum, and Priapeans	66
VII.	Three Epigrams	87
VIII.	Aetna	98
IX.	Confiscations: Dirae and Lydia	109
X.	Historical Setting of Eclogues	119
XI.	The Fugitive Allegory	125
XII.	The Pollio Group	131
XIII.	The Varus Group	152
XIV.	Hic Grave Servitium	162
XV.	Last Words	168
XVI.	Virgil, the Romanticist	172
	Index	190

CHAPTER I

MUDDY GAUL

It satisfies our natural pleasure in definiteness and it spares us the trouble and pains of investigation to know that Publius Vergilius Maro was born on the fifteenth day of October in the year 70 B.C., but more important is it to bear in mind that his parents belonged to the generation that grew up in the atmosphere of the civil war that was waged over the citizenship between Rome and her Italian allies. Concerning the location of his birthplace we are less well informed: Probus says thirty miles from Mantua; Suetonius, perhaps a better authority, says 'a Mantua non procul'. Mantuan he certainly was, as we know from his own epitaph, 'Mantua me genuit', and this information is sufficient even if it fails to satisfy a minuter curiosity. The essential thing to remember is the circumstance that he was born in an environment that was both legally and really provincial. It is worth while also to know that he was sent to school in Cremona and taken to Rome when he was sixteen years of age.

People of modern days, to whom the names of the illustrious cities of northern Italy, Turin, Milan, Padua, Verona, Venice, Ravenna, are inseparable parts of an imaginative fairyland called into being by centuries upon centuries of romantic Italian history, cannot fail to be startled when they reflect that the rich and extensive valley of the Po was only a Roman province in the days of Virgil's childhood and not yet a part of Italy in the legal content of that term. The name of Italy is said to have been first applied to the lower course of the Tiber and only gradually extended itself southwards over Magna Graecia and northwards towards the Alps. At the time of the poet's birth it is quite certain that the lower boundary of Cisalpine Gaul on the east was the small stream of the Rubicon, while on the west the famous conference of Luca in

56 B.C. will remind us that the authority of Julius extended almost to the Arno. The whole expanse of land from the Apennines and the Rubicon to the Alps, comprising almost all the cities of which the fame has served to cast a glamour over the name of Italy, constituted in ancient times the proconsular province of Cisalpine Gaul, and was divided into judicial districts just as distant Spain. In common parlance, as in Cicero's letters, for example, it was known simply as Gaul.

This failure to dissociate our Italian memories of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance from the prosaic recollections of antiquity, more than any other single instance of remissness on our part, has resulted in perverting our conceptions of the early surroundings and formative influences of the poet's youth. Because of our great sympathy for him and the roseate tints of the many atmospheres through which we necessarily look back to the age in which he lived and moved, we are prone to forget that he came down to Rome as a rude man from the frontier, and not merely from the edge of the frontier but from its hinterland, almost within sight of regions yet unsubdued to Roman arms. A man from such a country was not even expected to be able to speak good Latin. Cicero, discussing *urbanitas*, a fetish of the Roman of Rome, explains to Brutus that he will realize what it means when he goes to Gaul.[1] 'There he would find a vocabulary unfamiliar to the Roman ear, but these words could be unlearned and forgotten; what a man could never lose was the provincial accent, something hard to define in its vocalization but sufficient to mark him for ever as an alien to the capital.' This charge of Gallicism Virgil could no more escape than Livy could be spared the taunt of Patavinity.

There is, of course, no lack of evidence to show that northern Italy was teeming with vigorous life in those days. The citizens of the municipia possessed the suffrage and were willing to make the long journey to Rome that they might exercise it. Cicero in the first extant letter to Atticus announces his intention of spending the whole autumn of the year 65 in a speaking tour of that region,[2] and in the Second Philippic he expresses

[1] *Brutus*, 171–2. [2] *Ad Att.* i. 1, 2.

his disgust at the fact that Antony should have made a progress through those respectable towns in Gallic garb.[1]

The truth must be recognized that the centre of Italian thrift and prosperity was already shifting to these parts, as is amply demonstrated by the rôle they played in the contentions among the leaders that ensued upon the death of Julius. The latter had known well the temper and needs of that region. He had traversed it on his way to Spain as quaestor and again as praetor, and had sought for it the full franchise. While the conservative section of the Senate probably regarded, as of old, the Alps as the barriers of Italy, he saw that the enterprising Transpadanes had come to look upon them as the barriers of progress. During his first campaign in Gaul, when he made a swift return into these parts to enrol two new legions, he knew well where willing recruits were to be had. He had better opportunity than Tacitus in the following century to know that the fearless men of Cremona had been from the first the bulwark of Italy against the Gauls and all the dangers that threatened from the northern frontiers.[2] Some of the purest satire in Roman literature is to be found in his own account of the Ariovistus campaign when he describes the young aristocrats as paralysed with fear, weeping hot tears, and signing their wills or asking for leave.[3] The Transpadane Gaul, he knew well, had no fear either of Gaul or German. He was too near the frontiers to fear them, and it was usually the frontiersmen, we may remark, whether in ancient Italy, in Western America, or South Africa, that desired expansion.

The truth is that a bit of old Rome survived up there in Virgil's country. If one takes the volume of the Corpus of Latin Inscriptions for this region and consults the indices, he may rehearse page after page of the purest Roman names, lists which, though of imperial date, seem like a veritable roll-call of the old Republic and form a strange contrast to the motley dead of the Appian Way at the very gates of Rome. The colonists who had gone to these towns almost two centuries before had carried with them to this safe distance a portion not only of the blood but also of the virtue and thrift of a better

[1] xxx. 76. [2] *Hist.* iii. 34. [3] *B. G.* i. 10.

period. Surrounded by foreign foes, the spear ever ready to their hand, they had lived under conditions that had not prevailed in Italy southwards of Rome since the days of Samnite and Hannibalic wars. Like those nameless heroes who laid down their lives at Cannae and many another field, these Transpadanes were at the same time fighting men and tillers of the soil. While the luxurious and well-groomed gentleman of the capital was adding villa to villa, turning wheat fields into irrigated gardens, and replacing the fruitful olive by the useless myrtle, these hardy men of the north were felling the forest, adding farm to farm, and defending their acquisitions from the violence of rampant rivers by throwing up laborious dykes, or establishing communication by the construction of equally laborious roadways. The high places of their lands were adorned, we imagine, by old-fashioned farm-houses, not sumptuous villas, and the mule-team and the ox-cart were more familiar spectacles than the chair or the litter. Virgil affords us a glimpse of the landscape in the last lines of the First Eclogue.

> Et iam summa procul villarum culmina fumant
> maioresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.

There one might have seen the real old Roman atrium, blackened with smoke, the flaming fireplace, the clustering children, and the swarthy slaves, a Sabine homestead.

Yet if this country was full of fearless manhood, ambition, enterprise, eagerness for expansion, and primitive vigour, if neighbouring Alpine regions were as yet unsubdued, it does not follow that culture was quite wanting nor life without its relaxations. We know for a certainty that towns like Verona, Cremona, and Milan already had their schools and long had been sending the more gifted and ambitious of their young alumni to pursue their careers at the capital. Moreover, estates were large, slaves numerous, and the cost of *villeggiatura* very low. The valley of the Po in the torrid months of summer was doubtless as hot and dusty as in modern days, and we may well picture to ourselves the prosperous families collecting for a pleasant holiday at the Garda Lake or at Como. The fame of the peninsula of Sirmio was founded in the exquisite

verses of Catullus, and his career had probably reached its sunset by the time that young Virgil came down to Rome, which leads us to assume that the local fame of this ' eye of islands ' had been established long before. Virgil loved the Mincius and lived beside it, and how strange it would seem that he should never have visited Benacus? He may have seen Catullus himself.

It is a speaking tribute to the sincerity, refinement, and nobility of the unchronicled citizens of this Transpadane Gaul that three of the names most beloved in the kingdom of letters belonged to that land.[1] The first of these was the Roman Keats, the once happy Catullus, too guileless to steer the frail bark of his fortunes past the rocks of the Sirens, but not to perish before he had outstripped them all in song, the clearest lyric voice in Latin literature, who, though dead, has yet an Orphean power to draw the hearts of men. About the time that Lesbia's lover died another of the Orphean guild came down to Rome from that same country, our shy Mantuan, as tender-hearted as St. Francis of Assisi, a white soul, a wizard with words, who possessed all learning without pedantry, who sat with the mighty and was not puffed up, whose gentle nature makes friends even in this posterity. Last of the three came Titus Livius of Padua, dear old Livy, master of Virgilian prose, idealizer of the old Rome, whose long history is a sheer labour of love, a copious and plaintive praise of Roman virtue, which the knowing Quintilian declared with true judgement and curious felicity to be rich as milk and no less wholesome. What a contrast between the copious sincerity of this honest man from the north country and the hypocritical moralizing of Sallust, the devil who paraded as monk and from the lap of luxury composed the praises of simplicity! Sallust was born too near to Rome. Justice had taken flight from the land in which he lived, although she had not left the earth.

About Virgil there is much that reminds one of Abraham Lincoln. The American was large and ungainly, and no tailor could make him look smart. The Transpadane, we learn from

[1] See Shipley's *Race Mixture and Literary Genius in the Roman Provinces*, Washington University Studies, Vol. ix, Humanistic Series, No. 2.

Suetonius, was of large stature and a rustic appearance,[1] which lends corroboration to the tradition that certain lines of Horace about one whose toga hung awry and whose sandals had a way of slipping their straps, had reference to him.[2] In respect of the things that are not seen they were also alike, in their gentleness, in their sympathy, in their feeling for dumb animals, and in the general disposition of character that we call benignity. In both of them there was a singular tranquillity of mien not untouched by melancholy, in both a singular freedom from malice and vindictiveness. Yet not the least striking similarity between the pair is the degree to which each one of them carried his environment with him to the very last. Lincoln was always from the Middle West. Virgil was always a Transpadane.

Virgil was always a Transpadane in the Italic sentiment with which he had been imbued in the surroundings of his childhood. In those days his countrymen were still classed as provincials, and still waiting for the right to be called Italians and Roman citizens, a title of which they felt themselves to be worthy not only on account of personal pride and geographical position, but also on the ground of their loyalty and long services to the republican Government. The early manhood of the poet's father must have been passed in the years of the Social War, and as an intelligent man, probably situated beyond the pale of citizenship, he would have fully appreciated the aims of the allies, and their wrongs would have been stamped upon his mind by the spectacle of deported families driven to this region by the ruthless policy of Pompeius Strabo.[3] Pompey established new settlers in the old colonies, and must have introduced a leaven of the most spirited discontent. Nor was compulsory colonization the only device of autocracy. Captives from that same war were carried to senatorial estates in the Gallic territory, and forced to spend the remainder of their lives in the most humiliating state of servitude.[4] It was in this atmosphere that the poet grew up, an atmosphere of resolute but not disloyal aspiration.

[1] Don. 8.
[2] *Sat.* i. 3, 29–34.
[3] Ascon. *In Piso.* 2–3.
[4] Cic. *Pro Clu.* vii. 21.

The military history of that Social War has come down to us in sufficient detail to show that the allies waged it, not only with great skill and courage, but also with much success. What would enlighten us more is some record of the propaganda that must have accompanied and preceded it. When we read the bare pages of Appian we cannot but regret that he has placed no speeches in the mouths of his characters. If he had only recorded for us a single harangue that was employed to rouse the allies to that war, we should be more instructed than by the story of half a dozen battles. The gist of what we know of their aims amounts to this, that they desired to substitute *Italia* for *Roma*, as they did upon their coins. If their efforts ended in a technical defeat, and Rome absorbed the allies instead of being absorbed, as was bound to happen, nevertheless, they gained a partial revenge in literature. What they attempted by force of arms Virgil achieved in his poetry, and therein he showed the origin of his Italic sentiment. For Rome as a city, as a capital, as an idea, as an abstraction, he has left magnificent lines ; she is the fairest thing in the world, *Roma pulcherrima rerum*. Yet for Italy he pours forth a whole paean of praise, not merely a superlative word, a flashing line, but a veritable magnificat. The thought of Rome with its templed hills inspires his pride, but Italy possesses his heart. A Roman he could not be, could not become. Urbanity was not for him, either in thought or dress. Perhaps he never could quite lose that northern accent of speech and the long stride of a tall man who had stalked the broad fields of Venetia before ever he had stepped upon the pavements of the capital.. Italy was dear to him, and more particularly Mantua and Parthenope, but upon his tomb there was no place for the name of Rome.

In the lives of nations there is a certain law of compensation between the spiritual and the corporeal, between the imagination and conduct, between thinking and living. The power that governs our conduct may fail of mastering our minds. Perhaps it usually fails. The loyalties shared of many men, refused expression in action, in laws and institutions, may find a sweet revenge in books. The people of Scotland were unsuccessful in restoring the Stuarts to a throne but the prose

and verse of Sir Walter Scott was a glorious substitute for victory.

> They never fail who die
> In a great cause: the block may soak their gore,
> Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs
> Be strung to city gates and castle walls—
> But still their spirit walks abroad.

It was so with the Italic sentiment of the allies that swept over Italy in the youth of the poet's father. Cisalpine Gaul remained faithful to the Senate, held firm by the colonies, but the Italic sentiment smouldered on in the hearts of those beyond the pale of citizenship. In the *Georgics* the aspirations that actuated the struggle, the claim of a share in the pride of dominion, found resonant expression. With all the Roman's love of the country no Roman of Rome could have written the *Georgics*. The feeling immanent in them is Italian, not urban. It came from the farm and not from the villa. It is born of an environment spiritual and real that the poet could no more escape than he could shake off his rustic appearance. Great men do not shake off their environment; they impose it upon the imagination of their fellows.

In yet another respect the poet was first and always a Transpadane, a provincial. He was born far enough from Rome to see it in perspective, far enough to measure the dimensions of the fabric that had been slowly and surely reared. His view is not merely Italic; it is imperial. He possesses not merely the vision of a statesman of the time of the Social War; he satisfies just as well the demands of the imagination of a Roman of Gaul, Spain, or Africa. He is not merely an Augustan imperialist; he anticipates just as well the patriotic sentiments of the provincial of the first century, the second century, or posterity. To Romans of his own day who lived and moved and had their being in the selfish and ambitious rivalries of the last years of the Republic, to men such as Cicero it seemed as if a precious civilization was going to shipwreck, as if a State laboriously built up was plunging to sudden ruin and catastrophe at the last. To one like Sallust the state of society was only an historical clinic, a study of the last

stages of political and moral disease, a prelude of death; his remedies, however practical, only the postponement of dissolution. To the provincial, on the other hand, the Empire seemed too vast, too solidly founded, to be thrown down by the squabbles of the capital. Even to a man of Cicero's largeness of mind the Empire as an institution seems of little account compared with the vested interests of the equestrian order. In this field he does not rise above the advocate. It is our contemplative Transpadane who saw an epic in the tragedy, who saw the sunrise where others saw the sunset, who was the first to catch the vision of other forms of power yearning to mix themselves with life.

The racial extraction of a man cannot be determined by circumstantial evidence, and no enlightening deductions can be made without absolute certainty, if even then. For these reasons we should refrain from raising once more the question of Virgil's nationality did not the discussion of it serve to throw a certain light upon the nature of his environment during the formative period of his boyhood and upon his lifelong attitude towards the Empire and its founders.

He rightly says himself that Mantua was rich in ancestors.[1] The threefold origin that he mentions in the Tenth Aeneid suggested to Servius, or his collaborators, Thebans, Etruscans, and Gauls. Modern editors suggest Greeks, Etruscans, and Umbrians. Another might say, especially if he had visited the municipal museums of this region, Ligurians, Etruscans, and Gauls. Romans, of course, are eliminated from the interpretation of this passage since such an anachronism is unthinkable. Nevertheless, the assumption of a Roman origin will stand first in order of probability. It is possible that the Virgils were descended from the original settlers of the second century B.C. Against this we should urge two objections: first, the original colonists were Roman citizens and took the side of the Senate and Brutus and Cassius. The Senate, it is well known, looked upon Cisalpine Gaul as a stronghold.[2] Secondly, if we can be sure of anything in Virgil's life, it is this, that he was always pro-Caesarian and the eulogist of

[1] *Aen.* x. 201.

[2] Appian, iii. 27.

Italic as opposed to Roman sentiment. We are thus diverted to a rival hypothesis, that the poet's father was one of the colonists forcibly transplanted to these parts by Pompeius Strabo as a sequel to the Social War. Nor is this the only possibility: we learn from Cicero's speech for Cluentius [1] that a certain freeborn man of Asculum was taken captive in that war, transported to Gaul, and held in a degrading condition of bondage. An example like this, filtering down through an ill-written chapter of history, interpreted in the light of Pompey's notorious severity, justifies us in suspecting that all sorts of injustice were practised against the allies by unscrupulous officers of the aristocratic Government, and it may very well be that Transpadane Gaul was the destination of many a rebellious patriot. This certainly clarifies our conception of the surroundings in which the poet grew up, and, if he was Roman by birth, it points to the class in which his humble father most probably belonged.

The sentiment of the nineteenth century that prompted men to lay great stress upon racial traits, now happily abating, gave wide acceptance to the theory that Virgil may have felt the run of Gallic or Celtic blood in his veins, but the tender melancholy in his disposition and his steady interest in ultramundane things, the desire to send his soul out into the invisible, is just as well accounted for upon the assumption of an Etruscan origin. The patriotism of the poet had its local root in Mantua, whose vigour, he tells us, came from the Etruscan blood. Its very name is derived from Mantus, the Etruscan Pluto, and we read of it in the pages of Pliny [2] as the last stronghold of this mysterious race. Since their language might have been heard in the streets of Rome in the days of Aulus Gellius [3] it follows that Virgil may have heard it on all sides in his childhood, nor is it in the slightest degree impossible that he was familiar from his tender years with their gloomy imaginations and uncanny delight in fables of the underworld and the future life. If this be true, then we might account for the conspicuous eschatological bias of Italian thought from the *Culex* and Sixth Aeneid down through early Christianity to Dante. Yet we

[1] vii. 21. [2] *N. H.* iii. 130. [3] xi. 7, 4.

need not assume an Etruscan parentage for the poet; the alien in blood is quite usually more attracted by a novel folklore than the native-born.

An examination of names proves much and nothing.[1] *Vergilius* may be Roman, Etruscan, or Celtic. *Maro* might be Greek as well. If we were sure the father's name was *Stimichon* we might lean this way, and No. x of the *Catalepton* shows Greeks to have been in business in Cremona, but the Fifth Eclogue probably gave basis for the assumption. Tradition is silent unless we care to quote the *Vitae* of Paulus and Focas, which assert Etruscan birth. If one were enthusiastic for this theory he might call attention to the fact that the elder Virgil was a potter, an industry that seems to have been almost an Etruscan monopoly from Rome northwards. Yet one does not need to be a potter to own a pottery and bear the name. On the whole, we can only be sure of this, that the poet began his life in humble provincial surroundings among heterogeneous populations comprising Romans of different strata of colonization, varying degrees of civil liberty, and divergent political sympathies, all enjoying a superior social position to the Ligurians, Etruscans, Gauls, and immigrant Greeks. The poet himself we should locate in the lower stratum of the Roman population. His mother's family stood higher: 'parentibus modicis,' says Suetonius, 'ac praecipue patre.'

Yet, if he was not Etruscan, he was certainly Etruscophile, even in boyhood. His big interests and his little interests were singularly persistent in his nature. To please patrons he needed to cultivate no particular sympathies nor political attachments. Destiny placed him in surroundings of which he was adapted by virtue of inborn qualities and providential experience to become a part, and the thrust of noble impulses gave force to natural sentiments and attachments which drew him into appropriate friendships when the time was ripe. His Etruscan leanings are more likely to have been a cause than a result of his friendship with Maecenas. At best it could have been but one of many ties of intimacy, for, above all things, it must be recognized that the wise Etruscan did not

[1] Braunholtz, *Cl. Rev.* xxix, p. 104.

in any sense make Virgil's fortune; he only discovered him, or rather they discovered each other. The case was similar between Virgil and Augustus; the friendship was fore-ordained. The poet recognized the future princeps in the lad Octavius long before the practical-minded young Caesar realized the service that could be performed by the modest poet with his prophetic vision and constructive imagination. Virgil came but slowly into his own, but he did more for his master than his master could possibly do for him. Both were children of destiny. It was destiny that brought them together in the class-room of Epidius, picking the cast, as it were, for the great drama of the days to come.

It remains to speak of other features ascribable to this first environment. Virgil would have been no true son of a northern farmer had he been indifferent to money. The haughty prejudice of earlier scholars rejected as sheer sacrilege the ode of Horace that exhorts one of the name of Vergilius to leave for a season the pursuit of gain;[1] they assumed that this was some druggist, otherwise unknown, who was somewhat close about his ointment. To take the ode at its face value, as we are bound to interpret all the evidence bearing upon the poet's life, were far more enlightening. The natural inference from it is this, that the thrifty Mantuan, though possessed of a snug property, could hardly bring himself to part with sufficient money to buy a box of precious ointment. That members of the Augustan circle were candid and frank with one another we know, and why not consider this an instance of that very candour? Who is there that wishes to think of the poet as a saint or angel? Who would think of him as the vignettes of old editions depict him, with Byronic beauty? He looked like a countryman, we are sure, and why should he not have been close with his money, like the northern farmer? To deny that the Vergilius of the ode is our Vergilius spoils both the ode and our conception of the poet. He left at death a fortune worth about a million Roman sesterces. He was a true son of the north country, candid, kind, imaginative, romantic, careless of his personal appearance, it may be, and

[1] iv. 12.

perhaps not much of a courtier, and undoubtedly economical. He was a Transpadane.

A word of correction is due concerning the circumstances of the Virgils. The assumption of poverty is a convention of bucolic poetry, and Virgil made the most of it in the *Eclogues*. Over against this convention we must array the evidence of the *Dirae*, which has excellent claims to authenticity and affords corrective biographical data. It reveals to us that the Virgils possessed a vast estate, probably some thousands of jugera, comprising forests, pastures, cultivated fields, orchards, and vineyards, all traversed by the Mincius. In corroboration of this we have the express statement of Probus[1] that the estate of the Virgils in the confiscation of the year 42 was assigned to no less than sixty veterans, which accords with the information to be found in the biography of Suetonius that the father had attained to affluence by purchasing one piece of wild land after another. To this may be added the indubitable inference to be drawn from the Ninth Eclogue that the poet had secured, doubtless from Octavianus, an order for the restitution of a specified section of his lands, which would be unthinkable if the total acreage had not been rather large. Combining these facts we may readily conclude that the family, at least by the poet's seventeenth year, had become quite wealthy and were able to retire to the capital for the education of the children, there to live in ease and comfort. Moreover, when we reflect that sixty veterans with their respective households were henceforth to live off the acres that heretofore had poured their revenues into the purse of one small family, we may readily and safely dismiss the fancy that the poor shepherds of the *Eclogues* were intended in any literal way to represent the poet or his father. In these verses the poet seems to be eliciting the melancholy always attendant upon such evictions, and the allusion to his own fortunes, as usual, is of the most fleeting sort.

It is quite possible that the family wealth had been rapidly made out of conditions of trade occasioned by Caesar's cam-

[1] Thilo-Hagen, iii. 328; not the sort of thing these fabulous commentators invent.

paigns in Gaul. We learn casually from Tacitus, *Hist.* iii. 32, that Cremona, destroyed in the civil wars of A.D. 69, maintained a celebrated market. That the establishment of this market, in a region adapted to the production of both grain and live stock, dated back as far as Caesar's time is no bold conjecture. It is probably this to which Virgil refers himself in the following lines:

> Urbem, quam dicunt Romam, Meliboee, putavi
> stultus ego, huic nostrae similem, quo saepe solemus
> pastores ovium teneros depellere fetus.

The lambs of this *Eclogue*, we suspect, are but a pastoral circumstance, chosen to fit the poetry in hand; it is more likely young cattle and horses, which interest him so much in the *Georgics*, that were driven to Cremona. It may have been the demands of Caesar's army for remounts and draught animals, to be paid for in Gallic gold, that sent the prices soaring and enabled the frugal and prosperous landlord to migrate to Rome for the education of his promising boy. We are to-day in a position to know that a quinquennium, such as Caesar's first five years in Gaul, from 59 to 54 B.C., would be ample space for the making of a moderate fortune, nor would the commander be loath to place his orders in the nearest market and among a population that filled his legions and supported his cause. We suspect that the Transpadanes wanted the war and knew they would profit by it.

Virgil is said by Suetonius to have taken the toga on his birthday, the 15th October, in the second consulship of Pompey and Crassus, the same under whom he had been born, a bit of sentiment, perhaps, on the part of his parents. Since this must have implied a municipal citizenship he was doubtless present in Mantua or Cremona in the autumn of this year, rather too late in the season to set out for a year of study at Rome. It is consequently likely that this was the year passed in Milan. In the following year, the seventeenth of his age, Suetonius states that he wrote the *Culex*,[1] manifestly in the capital. So we may assume that the family migrated thither in good time for the opening of classes in the early autumn of 54. This concludes the first chapter in the poet's life.

[1] Don. 17 'cum esset annorum xvi'.

CHAPTER II

THE CULEX

In the days before he took the toga Virgil had already showed his inclination to versify, and Suetonius has preserved the couplet that celebrates the death of a certain robber named Ballista:

> Monte sub hoc lapidum tegitur Ballista sepultus;
> nocte die tutum carpe viator iter.

It is possible also that the plan of the *Culex* was conceived in this period, but whether sketched at Cremona and completed at Rome, or written entirely after his arrival there, we propose to take it up at this point for the reason that one cannot regard it as the result of studies pursued at Rome. It really belongs to the Transpadane period.

The substance of the poem is thus sketched by Suetonius: 'A serpent was in the act of creeping upon a shepherd, who, wearied with the heat, had fallen asleep in the shade of a tree, when a mosquito came flying off a swamp and stung him in the forehead. The man, awakened, crushed the mosquito, killed the serpent, and erected a monument bearing the couplet:

> Parve culex, pecudum custos tibi tale merenti,
> funeris officium vitae pro munere reddit.'

Fully two-thirds of the 414 lines, however, are devoted to the reproaches of the injured insect, which, in the form of a shade, returns by night to infest the dreams of the heedless man with terrors of the underworld. It is upon awakening that he consecrates the tomb and records his tardy gratitude. This constitutes a precious record of the original eschatological bias of Virgil's mind and forecasts the Sixth Aeneid. At the same time the curious personification of the tiny insect promises

by slender indications the human republic of the bees in the Fourth Georgic.

Accepting the express testimony of Suetonius that the poem was composed in his seventeenth year, that is, the year of his arrival in Rome, it affords us a welcome inventory of his mind and imagination at this moment. Except for the dedication to the beautiful and godlike Octavius it is purely a product of a Transpadane boyhood and the Cremona schools. Certain features, it is true, are merely Virgilian and not indicative of local influences and acquisitions. The good humour that pervades it, the immanent playfulness, are in perfect accord with the placidity of countenance that Suetonius declares to have been characteristic of the poet as a child and the benignity that Asconius ascribes to him as a man.[1] When not buffeted by adversity and embittered by ridicule he seems to have possessed a singular happiness of disposition not untouched by flashes of quiet wit. This natural brightness of spirit, though blighted at intervals by personal sorrow, disappointment, and calamity, reappears like sunshine after rain in the beatific hopes of the Messianic Eclogue. It glows through that whole collection as brightly as the sun in Neapolitan skies. Its radiance is subdued but not dissipated in the even, sincere, and wholesome enthusiasm of the *Georgics*. It finds expression in the confident prophecies of the *Aeneid*. It is the light that shines from the soul of one whose gaze is naturally directed forwards, who senses the dawn before it touches the perception of ordinary mortals.

The *Culex* is a sincere expression of feeling, not in spite of its tastelessness and pedantry, but by virtue of these very defects. The theme is grotesque, reminding one of those plays of wit preserved to us in the pages of Fronto, but the very absurdness of this idea of an oracular mosquito, the extravagant conceit that such an insignificant insect should possess a soul and desire gratitude, belongs squarely in the period of adolescence. That Virgil wrote it between his sixteenth and seventeenth birthdays is not an improbable nor an offensive assumption. That he wrote it in his twenties we cannot bring ourselves to

[1] Don. 4; Don. auct. 65.

believe. The very pedantry of it is markedly consistent with the earlier age. No one is more pedantic than a precocious boy at the age of adolescence, and it is for this very reason that there is something childish about pedantic men of greater years. The lad who wrote the *Culex* is already familiar with the commonplaces of mythology, with Pan and satyrs, nymphs, naiads, dryads, and with a host of proper names, names of the class that Virgil culled over in later days and loved to repeat for sheer beauty and variety of sound. The author already knows the legends of creation and the beginnings of civilization, the story of the Argonauts, the Theban cycle, and the Homeric poems. His very inferno, a mere catalogue without visual imagination or geography, is pure boyish pedantry. The whole content of it defines the range of a Cremona library, the rolls chosen by a prudent grammaticus for the sons of watchful parents. It represents at the same time the eager acquisitions of an intellectual boy whose appetite for reading was as keen as his tastes and sentiments were undeveloped. There is nothing insincere about it.

The gentle self-depreciation with which the poem begins is genuinely Virgilian, and consonant with that shyness and diffidence of his demeanour to which the faithful Suetonius bears witness.[1] This humility pervades the *Eclogues*; it reappears in the postscript to the *Georgics*, and found expression in the opening lines of the *Aeneid*, suppressed by the executors. It links up the *Culex* with all his later works. The love of the country also, though a hackneyed topic of Roman literature, was with him an honest sentiment. It comes to expression in the *Culex* with boyish enthusiasm, thrown out like the headless lance, the *hasta pura*, of a stripling's arm. After many years it is delivered in the First Georgic with the easy strength and grace, the sure and effortless skill of developed manhood, though the sentiment is the same, only confirmed and strengthened by the conviction of experience. It is an index of the singleness and simplicity of his temper. The boy was father of the man, and his days, in spite of painful interruption and postponement, were bound, each to each, by natural piety.

[1] Don. 11.

Even so slight a matter as the motive of the serpent is not to be lightly overlooked. Virgil's interest in serpents was life-long. This gratuitously malevolent monster of the *Culex* reappears in the Third Georgic as the sinister dragon of the Calabrian swamps, which, swollen with food and venom, issues upon the land, full of malice and hostility. No one can fail to observe the relish with which the poet describes their iridescent scales and writhing forms, to note his effort so to involve his language and overlap his phrases as to imitate their repulsive but fascinating convolutions. It would be interesting to set side by side this passage in the *Culex*, the description in the Third Georgic, and the picture of the serpent of the tomb in the Fifth Aeneid.[1] It would seem as if the description of serpents was a nucleus of the poet's style, as if the exercises upon this theme had contributed not a little to his mastery of phrase. He assimilated his language to his subject, a weird variety of onomatopoeia. The earliest of these descriptions exceeds in length and verbosity. The dragons that swept down upon Laocoon are done with brevity and dignity, the wounded reptile of the Fifth Aeneid, to which the limping ship of Sergestus is compared, is done with pathetic vividness ; the serpents of the furies briefly depicted with gruesome delight. With Virgil this is a poetic, an imaginative, cult.

The truth is that certain permanent interests of Virgil are inherent in the *Culex* just as the mature thoughts of Plato are immanent in a slight and early dialogue. It is really a juvenile photograph of his mind at the age of entering upon more serious and practical studies. He now leaves the path into which he had entered and gives himself to the pursuit of a conventional career. The total extent of his aberration constitutes roughly a decade, the interval that to most intellectual men is consumed in the acquisition of knowledge and fundamental experience of the world. Virgil is no exception and he met with the needful bruises, shocks, disappointments, and disillusions. He studied rhetoric ; no doubt he declaimed ; he saw some military service in 49 and probably endured a tedious and imperfect convalescence. He appeared in the courts but once, and then renounced a vain ambition along with all the learning that was

[1] *Culex*, 163 ff. ; *Geo.* iii. 425 ; *Aen.* v. 84.

incidental to it. He tries a different kind of life and tests a different happiness. In the end he emerges upon the road that he had deliberately left, resumes the labours he had abandoned, ties the threads together where they had been sundered, and finishes the web with the same patterns with which he had set it upon the loom. The *Culex* belongs in a progression of which the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid* are consecutive terms.

The *Culex* is terribly pedantic and pedantry is learning unrelated to life and conduct. It is the work of a lad who had read widely and eagerly, who has been conscious from the very first of a driving ambition and a passion to be a part of things, but he could not know that the muse as a taskmaster is a very Eurystheus. He could not know that one labour was only to be the prelude of another. The erudition for which he reached out so greedily was to bring him disgust. The glory to which he aspired was to vanish like a mocking spectre. The happiness he hoped to gain by merit and industry was to prove but a glittering thing that was not gold. The world that he had hoped would extend him a welcome had flung at him but heartless gibes and ridicule. He could not know that the prophet sometimes retires to the wilderness but more often is driven. He had set out to make his own career but the fates were planning it for him.

In speaking of Virgil's precocity it is wise to make a distinction. He was precocious only in learning, not in sentiment. There was no taint of unhealthiness about him, no touch of the genius that borders on insanity, nothing of the abnormal. The ripeness of his nature was not hastened by disease, as in the case of Keats, nor by passion and dissipation, as in the case of Catullus. Along with his ardent ambition for distinction there is a certain reserve and sobriety of disposition. In sentiment he was perhaps the very opposite of precocious, and his progress towards maturity of taste and mastery of form was equally gradual and slow. The earliest of his *Eclogues* was probably written near his twenty-eighth birthday and this date, so far from marking the ripeness of his powers, merely denotes the moment at which he struck for the first time into the path adapted to his gifts and talents. His style was yet to be

deepened and intensified, his diction elaborated, the rhythm of his verse was yet to acquire its maximum stride and swing, the reach and scope of his interests was yet to be discovered and revealed; the full range of his vision, backwards and forwards, was yet to be attained. As a poet and artist, he is far more the product of reflection and experience than of native impulse or godborn ecstasy. Like his own countryman Livy, he is sane, normal, and wholesome, and he owed more to the ripening influence of time, to painful application, and to courageous submission to criticism than to natural power. As a poet he was aptly endowed, fortunate in his environment, and providentially schooled by adversity, but he matched every element of chance in his career by self-developed virtues, patience, self-discipline, and toil.

The style of the *Culex* is not characteristically Virgilian. The little turns of phrase, the playing with case constructions, the repetition of themes, the daring omissions, the little short circuits, are quite wanting. It lacks entirely the steady rhythm, the reserve and restraint, the retarded dignity of the best Virgilian verse. The truth is that the author of the *Culex* is delighted that he finds himself able to versify and the language is really prosaic. He desires to make a display of this facility and really lacks something to say, as boys of sixteen usually do. The highest such a one can attain is to write a prize poem, which normally fails in both subject and style. Here and there he will by sheer good luck strike off a good couplet or triad that could be used a second time,[1] but the mature poet must be able to turn out fine lines in such frequency that substantial sentiments find therein an adequate expression, and he must have courage and industry to delete the faltering, limping, ambitious, and ambiguous verses. To this stage our poet did not arrive until he met success with the *Eclogues*, and to look for the earmarks of his style at an earlier time is quite a fundamental mistake. The really significant facts to observe are these, that the *Culex* exhibits a boyish pedantry, a barren manner, and the tenuity of diction that one would expect from a healthy and normally minded boy of rather superior intellectuality at the age of adolescence.

[1] Collected by Miss Jackson, *Cl. Quart.* 1911, pp. 163 ff.

CHAPTER III

ROME

THE period covered by this chapter extends from the arrival in Rome, probably in the early autumn of 54, until the retirement to Naples in the spring of 45, altogether slightly less than a decade. It may be divided into three parts: first, from 54 to 49, an interval of uninterrupted study of which we have no records; second, a year of military service mentioned in No. xiii of the *Catalepton*, from which we gather that the ill health of the poet dated from this experience; third, the three years from 48 to 45, from which we have six lines addressed to Tucca, three epigrams directed against an unnamed person, who is almost certainly Antony, and the mention of a single appearance as a pleader, preserved by Suetonius. Towards the close of this period he is contracting permanent friendships, especially in the Epicurean circle, and finally embraces this philosophy and takes leave for ever of Rome and the public career.

Suetonius states that the poet received what we should call his primary and secondary education at Cremona. Since his mother's name was Magia and the Magian gens is known to have been settled at this place, it is not going far to assume that his grandparents or other relatives were there residing, among whom he doubtless found a home. Moreover, since his father had married his master's daughter and the business interests of masters and former servants are usually shared in common, we may further assume that his father was well known in the great market town, and it was probably there that the produce of his fields and pastures were placed on sale. This is consistent with the coupling of the names of Mantua and Cremona in the poem addressed to Siro's villa:

> Tu nunc eris illi
> Mantua quod fuerat quodque Cremona prius.

Under these circumstances the boy would have found himself

surrounded by interested friends and at the same time not far removed from parental care and supervision. The greater part of the year would be spent with some prominent grammaticus of the thriving colony, the summer months by the beloved Mincius, not excluding the possibility of a pleasant *villeggiatura* on the shores of the beautiful Garda Lake.

It is commonly assumed on the basis of no evidence that Virgil came down to Rome alone. We have shown reason to believe that lack of means could not have made this necessary, and all examples advise against it. We know that Horace arrived in the charge of a watchful father. It would seem that Ovid and his brother were guided by a careful and apprehensive parent. Scholars assume that Propertius was in the tutelage of his mother. It is true that the assumption of the toga was looked upon as the beginning of liberty, but surely the temptations of youth in the metropolis were rather too well known to justify an anxious paterfamilias in slipping the leash of authority at so early an age. Moreover, the Virgils were of the north country where the ancient restraints of parental discipline had not been relaxed, we may believe, to the same degree as in the opulent society of Rome. On the whole we should prefer to assume that the entire family migrated to the capital leaving the estate in the care of a steward, whose accounts would be rendered to the proprietor on the occasion of periodical visits. It is possible that the household would return to Mantua for the summer months, just as the prosperous landowner of our American West returns to his homestead after wintering in British Columbia or California. The parallel between these conditions and those of Transpadane Gaul we shall mention again.

The migration of the Virgil family is not to be regarded as an isolated incident due to a singular ambition on the part of the future poet or his parents. It was only an indication of a general movement widely operative in the Transpadane colonies of those days. It signified the fruition of a long period of peace and prosperity in a region peopled in the previous centuries by colonists of relatively pure Roman blood. It was the manifestation of new and vigorous life in the branches of

a tree that had ceased to grow at the top. From the beginning of the Empire the vigour and vitality of the Roman citizen body was drawn from the provinces. Spain, Gaul, and Africa contributed such men as the Senecas, Quintilian, St. Augustine, Apuleius, and a nameless multitude. From the north of Rome came almost all the men that surrounded Augustus, contrasting strangely with the close patrician society of the late republic, where even Cicero of Arpinum could be twitted with being an outsider. The truth is that in Virgil's generation the Transpadane element was so large that a score of names survive in literary history alone,[1] from which we may assume the existence of vast numbers in various walks of life. The Virgils had joined in a migration.

The family, when they arrived at the quaint old Rome of the year 54, though it may have seemed wonderful by comparison with Cremona, probably consisted of the parents, three sons, of whom Maro was the eldest, and servants. It cannot have been very many years after this when Maro became the head of the house. That the father was blind in his later years we know from Suetonius, and from the eighth of the *Catalepton*, written when rumours of confiscations were flying, we easily glean that the helplessness of the father was making him a special charge upon the care and affection of the son, to whom the filial relationship was one of special tenderness. The elder Virgil, who, as a servant, must have proved his worth and thrift before winning the hand of his master's daughter, may have married in middle age, an assumption that is borne out by the fact that his widow remarried and again became a mother. This being so, we may well believe that the father was well advanced in years at the time of the confiscations, which gives additional meaning to the son's anxiety. He was the *pius Vergilius* no less than his hero Aeneas, whose father was similarly afflicted by age and loss of sight.

That Virgil was immediately upon his arrival thrown into the company of the young and precocious Octavius is almost

[1] List in Zwicker, *De vocabulis et rebus Gallicis sive Transpadanis apud Vergilium*, pp. 6 ff.

certain. The *Culex* is addressed to him, and Suetonius, an authority not easy to overthrow in questions of fact, asserts that the *Culex* was written in the author's seventeenth year, the very year of his arrival in Rome. We admit that numeral corruptions occur in manuscripts, but a numeral corruption in this instance cannot be proven. We take the position that Virgil received an intimation of the greatness, we may say divinity, of the lad as early as this year, and that this motive is lifelong in his heart from this date. The poet, we must remember, was attended by an extraordinary fortune, and persistence of sentiment is one of his outstanding qualities. His intuitions, we shall endeavour to show, were supernaturally happy. The enthusiastic address of the poem, *sancte puer, venerande puer*, calls for no specific occasion. The same words are applied to Euryalus in the *Aeneid*. We know the amazing beauty of the lad Octavius, whom men doubted whether to call Mercury or Apollo. We know his extraordinary self-confidence. Virgil's heart and soul were captured. It is the impression made by this beautiful self-sufficient boy when for the first time he met the eyes of the tall, bashful, ungainly lad from the north that is set down for us, we suspect, in quite another connexion, *Ecl.* v. 64 :

Deus, deus ille, Menalca !

This vision of Daphnis follows the fall of Perusia in the spring of 40, but the triumph of Octavianus only served to confirm the original intuition of divinity. The *Eclogues* abound in such fugitive allusions.

In the Bern *Vita* we read that Virgil studied with the young Octavius under Epidius the rhetorician. It is not impossible. Octavius would have been in his eleventh year, it is true, but Octavius was precocious and Octavius was privileged, and his career teems with improbabilities. In the lives of extraordinary people one cannot safely draw general inferences, and we are dealing in this case with two extraordinary people attended by extraordinary fortunes. One may say ' I won't believe ', but he cannot say ' I cannot believe '. In the *Vita* we read that Virgil, upon coming to Rome, at once, *ut primum*,

enrolled with Epidius, and Octavius was a fellow pupil. We choose to believe that from this first contact resulted the cult of the future princeps in the fancy of the imaginative boy. In a literary way he is the founder of the cult. In the address of the *Culex* lies immanent the sentiment of the Messianic Eclogue, the Caesarian sentiment in the *Georgics*, and the leading motive of the *Aeneid*. Years and the tedious vicissitudes of public and private catastrophes were necessary to its working out, but the fact remains of a strange affinity of destiny between this imaginative lad from the north country and this godlike young aristocrat. The same fate that smiled for a moment on the class-room of Epidius brooded sadly over that death-bed in Brundisium. Virgil's career began when first he saw Octavius ; he died in his service. With all his comprehensiveness there is a singular sincerity and simplicity in his thought. As he was from first to last a Transpadane, so he was from the moment that he arrived in Rome an Augustan. He was the first Augustan.

There never was true prophet to whom the prince of evil failed to display the kingdoms of the earth and the riches thereof, nor would he neglect our poet. The Rome to which he came down seemed full of worldly opportunity ; it held out to him the lure of wealth, happiness, fame, and power, and he probably felt covetous of all. In the first lines of the *Ciris*, written after he had repulsed the muses and bundled learning out of doors, he confesses to have been torn asunder by a passion for different sorts of distinction. To surmise his ambitions is not difficult. He hoped to become an orator. In that age no one with such a conspicuous aptitude for the use of words could have failed to entertain the hope of lifting himself into prominence by his eloquence. He must have looked forward also to the career of office, the *cursus honorum*, without which he could never expect to take his stand as a conspicuous pleader before the praetor's tribunal, much less to occupy a curule chair upon its eminence. Side by side with these dreams of glory remained all the time the attachment to the muses, the call of Parnassus, two incompatible paths, as Cicero lived to learn.

From the arrival in Rome till 49 we have no record of literary labours, doubtless an interval of hard study broken only by the regular visits to Mantua. It is not likely that the elder Virgil looked with favour upon the poetical aspirations of his boy. It is more likely that, with the not unaffectionate but practical severity of a frugal landowner, he required of him an unstinted display of his natural industry and lust of learning. During these four years, we may assume, the obedient son devoted himself to the acquisition of that secular knowledge which afterwards filled him with disgust but was really an indispensable prerequisite of his greatest accomplishments. The outbreak of the civil wars found him in the middle of his twenty-first year, a man in stature and age but morally a minor. It drew him into its vortex and sent him back with shattered health, but he was now a man and from these days began to play a man's part. From this time onwards he preserved for his own satisfaction in the minor corpus of his writings the milestones of his career.

From the year 49 down to that occasion in the year 40 when the recognition by Octavianus of the value of his services is celebrated in the First Eclogue, we have evidences of every turn in his fortunes. It goes without saying that he looked forward to at least a year of military service, and when the opportunity came it was real fighting. Since Italy was combed for recruits, first by Pompey, then by Caesar, we should infer upon general grounds that he gave in his name, but we are not left to conjecture. The opening lines of No. xiii of the *Catalepton* bear indubitable witness to a winter and summer campaign preceded by a sea voyage and followed by victory:

> Iacere me, quod alta non possim, putas,
> ut ante, vectari freta
> nec ferre durum frigus aut aestum pati
> neque arma victoris sequi?

This can be nothing else than the crossing of the Adriatic to Dyrrhachium, the terrible winter siege that followed, and the battle of Pharsalus fought on a summer's day in the stifling plains of Thessaly, where even the harvesters work by night on account of the heat. Heat and cold are commonplaces of

war, but when a voyage, a winter, a summer, and a pursuing victor are combined in a poem ascribed to Virgil, how can we doubt the identification of the reference?

While this topic is before us a word may be said of descriptions of battles. Virgil is said to shrink from the task, to feel no joy in it. We gladly accept the traditional view and still more gladly the inferences. If we may judge from the attitude of students of our own day who have gone through the Great War, we should say that the unwillingness to talk of it or write of it is proof that a man has seen with his own eyes its horrors. We have made casual tests of student veterans whom we know intimately, but not one will consent to describe the terrible spectacles he must have witnessed. If Homer takes delight in portraying such scenes, then Homer never saw the reality of the thing. Nowadays it is writers of fiction that delight in such themes. Therefore Homer belonged in that class, unless humanity has changed. We must seriously consider whether our judgements of Virgil must not be revised. The habit of detraction is ancient, traditional, insidious, and difficult to escape. We must be upon our guard against it every moment. Virgil did many things against his will. Poetry to him was a glad service but still a labour of duty. He hated war but he described it just as he disliked rhetoric but employed the rhetorical, despised mythology but related the myths, and revolted from pedantry but conscripted his erudition.

Since we have mentioned No. xiii of the *Catalepton* we choose to say more of it now, although it belongs to the last months of 46 when Caesar, setting out for Spain, left Antony behind him bankrupt and disgraced. The poem was possibly in the hands of Cicero, because it consists of a stinging fusillade of accusations against the former master of horse and runs curiously parallel with the sketch of his crimes that begins with the eighteenth chapter of the Second Philippic. Both dwell upon his earlier and his later bankruptcy, his scandalous connexion with men, his association with low characters, and his rapacity. Virgil, it is true, uses no names, but the coincidence of time and the tally of offences is too close to be mistakable. Only on one count do the versions run apart;

and this is the portrait of the infamous uncle of Antony, Gaius Antonius. His morals were bad enough, we know from independent sources, but Cicero steadily defended him as a return of gratitude for his assistance in suppressing the conspiracy of Catiline. Yet at this point Sallust comes to our aid: Gaius Antonius did not actually engage in the battle against Catiline[1] because on that day he was ill with the gout, and Virgil's poem concludes with a mention of this disease:

> Videbo habentem praeter ignavos nihil
> fratres et iratum Iovem
> scissumque ventrem et hirneosi patrui
> pedes inedia turgidos.

These details, bankruptcy, worthless brothers, and the gouty and bibulous uncle, all conspire to point to the Antonys.[2]

To go through the whole poem would be unpleasant on account of the vileness of certain charges, but we may touch upon a point or two. The shocking conduct of the master of horse during the absence of Caesar in Egypt is the natural reference of line 9:

> Quid, impudice et improbande Caesari?

Details are furnished by Cicero of Antony's thefts, which Virgil also mentions:

> seu furta dicantur tua.

The long list of misdeeds recited proves that the narrative reaches down to the time when Antony married Fulvia and dismissed Cytheris. The fat wife of line 30 will be Fulvia:

> obesam ad uxorem redis.

The desperate state of bankruptcy mentioned at the close will point to the insistent demand of Caesar for the price of Pompey's house and other properties that was made just before his departure for Spain towards the end of 46. The reconciliation that occurred on Caesar's return must have filled Virgil with disgust, as it did all patriots, and perhaps precipitated the

[1] *Cat.* 59. 4. [2] *Amer. Jour. of Phil.* xxxiii, pp. 317 ff.

retirement to Naples that followed in the spring of 45. Of this we shall speak in the next chapter.

Virgil had already anticipated Cicero in his attacks upon Antony some two years previously on the occasion of his marriage to Antonia, daughter of the notorious uncle. Cicero attempts a *commiseratio* for the poor wife,[1] whom her husband put away because of an intrigue with Dolabella. In this case the orator had a son-in-law as well as a former colleague to defend, and so may be excused for not telling the truth. The epigram is brief, and hints at Antony's nocturnal habits under the pseudonym of *Noctuinus*, formed from *noctua* as *Corvinus* from *corvus*. Since Messalla Corvinus was an admirable friend of Virgil's the pseudonym lay close at hand.

> Superbe Noctuine, putidum caput,
> datur tibi puella, quam petis, datur;
> datur, superbe Noctuine, quam petis.
> sed, O superbe Noctuine, non vides
> duas habere filias Atilium,
> duas, et hanc et alteram, tibi dari?
> Adeste, nunc adeste: ducit, ut decet,
> superbus ecce Noctuinus—hirneam.
> Thalassio! thalassio! thalassio!

The name *Atilius* is sufficiently like *Antonius* to suggest it, and Romans were quick to catch such innuendoes; the word *hirnea* recalls *hirneosus patruus* of *Catalepton* xiii, quoted above. It has a double meaning, however. It translates the Greek *Κοτύλων*, a proper name from *κοτύλη*, denoting, like *hirnea*, a drinking vessel. This man, Varius Cotylon, was a boon companion of Marcus, apparently a legacy from the suite of his sporting uncle. Antony gave him a command in Gaul.[2] As for *superbus*, Plutarch mentions Antony's haughtiness before he has finished two chapters of his biography, and it was probably this characteristic that led Philargyrius to refer the *superba fastidia* of *Ecl.* ii. 15 to the same man. The innuendo of *thalassio* is obscene, as in xiii. 16; Cicero, *Phil.* ii. 62–3 for the sin, where *Hippias* may be a sobriquet.

A companion piece to the above, and later in date, is No. vi,

[1] *Phil.* ii. 99. [2] Plutarch, *Vita* 18.

which we print because it is usually punctuated and interpreted amiss :

> Socer beate, nec tibi neque alteri
> generque Noctuine, putidum caput,
> tuoque nunc puella talis et tuo
> stupore pressa rus abibit, et mihi
> ut ille versus usquequaque pertinet,
> ' gener socerque, perdidistis omnia.'

' Blessed father-in-law, and son-in-law Noctuinus, sink of corruption, for the sake of neither the one nor the other of you will the lady, and she is not fastidious, disgusted with the sottishness of both of you, go to a country house, and to me it occurs how aptly that quotation fits the case " Son-in-law and father-in-law, between you you have ruined everything ".'

That this was written in Rome and in the early summer is proven by the conventional words *rus abibit*, and since Antony is still married to his cousin the year will be 47. In the following year he married Fulvia and parted with the actress Volumnia or Cytheris. Cicero tells so many half-truths in the *Philippic* that one hardly knows what to believe. He states that Antony dismissed the actress, who will be the *puella* of this epigram. He naturally fails to mention that she transferred her affections to the noble Brutus. Of course the liaison must have terminated in a quarrel, which appears to be here recorded. The chief interest of the piece for us lies in this, that Virgil is shown to be in Rome at this time, that his mind is full of Catullan iambics, and that he anticipates Cicero in his attacks upon Antony. We have already laid down the thesis that Virgil was always a Transpadane ; to this we added that from the first meeting with Octavius he was always an Augustan ; we now add a third, that from the days of the Pharsalian campaign he was always an anti-Antonian.

If we are accustomed to think of Virgil as a poor poet living on a small estate in the north country, or sitting with his tablets in the spreading shade of a giant pine, it may be difficult to picture him as the eldest son of an affluent family living in Rome off his rents. It certainly will contravene traditional ideas to think of him as an able man taking a martial

share in the struggles of his day, to think of him as one who hates war because he has seen it, and shrinks from describing it because he longs to forget it ; to think of him as a good hater and the wielder of a biting and fearless pen ; to think of him as the predecessor of Cicero in the warfare that added the finishing touches to the orator's fame and cost him his life. Yet if we accept the minor corpus of his works, which he appears to have preserved as his autobiography, no different conclusions are possible. Before his capacity for service as a poet was admitted he qualified as a man, as a soldier, as a patriot, as a campaigner, and as a hater. At every turn of the game he played an active and courageous part. He stood by his leader, by his country, by his parents and friends. He lived the piety that he preached. Not yet has his reputation been rescued from the storm of detraction which his initial success precipitated.

To this period belongs still another number, the first of the *Catalepton*, addressed to Tucca. The text was badly handled by Scaliger and is not yet established. For this reason we offer a version and a translation.[1]

> De qua saepe tibi, venit, sed, Tucca, videre
> non licet ; occulitur limine clausa viri.
> De qua saepe tibi, non venit adhuc mihi ; namque
> si occulitur, longe est tangere quod nequeas.
> Venerit, audivi. Sed iam mihi nuntius iste
> quid prodest ? Illi dicito quae rediit.

In the last line our editors print *cui* where we have *quae*. The best MS. has *qui*, which is impossible, and the rest *que*, which gives the necessary *quae*. It is, of course, the lady ' who has returned '.

' Tucca, the lady in question has returned, but she cannot be seen. Her husband keeps the door locked upon her. I say the lady in question has not yet returned so far as I am concerned, for since she 's locked in—what you cannot reach might as well be miles away. They insist she has returned, and I understand, but of what earthly use is such a message to me ? The needful thing is to get a message to her, who they say has returned.'

What are we to think of this poem as a bit of biographical

[1] Fairclough's version of the *Catalepton*, *Loeb Classical Library*, is recommended.

material? In opposition to received ideas we have found him to have been a fighter, a hater, and the author of snapping iambics. We have seen him fascinated by the worst examples of Catullus. Did he also let himself go so far as to indulge in an intrigue with a married woman, which was more than tolerated under the Julian régime? If it were so we might perhaps allow him the absolution accorded to St. Augustine, who sinned sufficiently, but, after all, sin is not proven. One may play with sinful thoughts, and there is no doubt that Virgil for a brief period, partly through admiration for Catullus, partly through his unpreparedness, as yet, to revolt against life as he found it, allowed himself to drift with a cross-current. One swallow does not make a spring and one epigram does not make a rake. It only serves to demonstrate the temporary influence of an unwholesome example and environment over one who could not for the moment think his way out of it, or as yet descry a kind of life in harmony with his fundamental tastes and principles. Yet a way of escape was opening up.

The innate and long cherished ambitions of an earnest man, especially when bound up with the hopes of affectionate parents, to whom all things cannot be explained, are not soon nor easily broken down and relinquished, and Virgil must have endured many a painful hour. His health was no longer good, and the chronic affections of his throat, lungs, and stomach, which dated from the Dyrrhachium winter, would be reminding him continually of the wisdom of changing his residence, if not his career. It is hardly possible, either, that his inability to keep command of his voice in the face of the circle of the tribunal was unsuspected before the occasion of one disastrous experiment. To personal factors of decision were to be added the unhappy political outlook. Julius Caesar, however great his posthumous fame, never succeeded in capturing the Roman imagination during his lifetime, nor yet in winning conviction that he could bring about a stable condition of government. He never made the conquest of Virgil that the young Octavius did, and his personal conduct must have been particularly offensive to that very element of society from which the Augustan circle was to spring. The crowning disappointment,

of course, was the restoration of Antony to a high place in favour and authority upon the return from Munda. At this event there is a general dispersion of the student population of the capital, some going to Athens, others to Naples.

It is not to be supposed, however, that Virgil's last days in Rome were entirely miserable. At the same time that clouds were gathering in one quarter the sky was clearing in another, and the spontaneous classification of men that goes on in every active community was sifting out and bringing to his acquaintance a group of individuals who by virtue of their tastes, talents, and training possessed the power of rendering him precisely the aid and advice that he required at this juncture, and likewise were able to furnish him that friendly atmosphere without which his nature was sure to defer its season of bloom and fruitage. The line of cleavage among the younger men seems to have taken direction from the controversies of philosophical sects, and we are not surprised to find our human and genial Virgil throwing in his lot with the Epicureans, the champions of friendliness.

The gem of the *Catalepton* is No. v, the gleeful farewell to Rome with all the abominations that it signified to Virgil, its controversies, bombast, pedantry, stupidity, satire, and foppery. We print the text as follows:

> Ite hinc, inanes, ite, rhetorum ampullae,
> inflata rore non Achaico verba,
> et vos, Selique Tarquitique Varroque,
> scholasticorum natio madens pingui,
> ite hinc inanis, cymbalon iuventutis,
> tuque, O mearum cura, Sexte, curarum,
> vale, Sabine; iam valete formosi.
> Nos ad beatos vela mittimus portus
> magni petentes docta dicta Sironis
> vitamque ab omni vindicabimus cura.
> Ite hinc, Camenae, vos quoque ite iam sane,
> dulces Camenae, nam fatebimur verum,
> dulces fuistis: et tamen meas chartas
> revisitote, sed pudenter et raro.

The first couplet has reference to the controversies of the Asiatic and Attic schools of oratory, the latter advocating

a simple and direct style, the former a flowery and pretentious way of speaking; the pompous manners of Antony drew him to the latter, Plutarch, *Vita*, 2. Virgil was an Atticist, as we learn from the second line above, of which the interpretation depends upon the reference to the cicada, a symbolic insect among the Athenians, which was supposed to feed upon dew. The Selii, two in number, were pedants of Piso's circle, Tarquitius the writer on Etruscan antiquities. Of him, as of Varro, the poet lived to change his opinion, his present disgust of erudition being a transient attitude. The climax of abominations, *cymbalon iuventutis*, is, of course, Antony himself. The figurative meaning of this must be sought in a biting remark of Tiberius about a vain-glorious grammarian, Pliny, *N. H. Intro.* 25 'Apion quidem grammaticus (hic quem Tiberius Caesar *cymbalum mundi* vocabat cum propriae famae tympanum potius videri posset) immortalitate donari a se scripsit ad quos aliqua componebat'. Since this Apion devoted himself to beating the drum of his own fame, it follows that *cymbalum mundi* signifies 'the loudest noise in the universe' or 'the greatest egotist on earth'. On this analogy our *cymbalon iuventutis* will mean 'the most blatant self-trumpeter of the age'. Yet this is but one factor of the interpretation. We must recall the tendency to paraphrase and parody in Virgil's verse; he is building on the well-known title *princeps iuventutis*. Antony, as we learn from Cicero,[1] boasted of his *principatus* among Caesar's followers, which the orator turns into 'chief of blackguards'.[2] We find another tribute to his egotism in *Phil.* ii. 70 'Et consul et Antonius'. Plutarch describes his manners, *Vita*, 2, as vain, pompous, insolent, and assuming. He was an Asiatic of the Asiatics: hence Virgil's *inanis*, harking back to *inanes*, which denotes the Asiatics in the first line. Quintilian, xii. 10, 16, in his characterization of this school repeats two of Virgil's adjectives, 'inflati illi et inanes'. Livy, xlv. 23, 16, employs the same term: 'Non negaverim et totam Asiae regionem inaniora parere ingenia et nostrorum tumidiorem sermonem esse.' This identification of Antony is clinched by the addition of Sextus, 'nausea of my

[1] *Phil.* ii. 5.

[2] Ibid. xiv. 27.

nauseas', who must be Sextus Clodius, Antony's rhetorician, mockingly called Sabinus because he was Sicilian.

To the rest of this poem we shall often refer in the following pages: it implies that Virgil is bidding farewell to Rome, that he is seeking the happy haven of Epicureanism, which means the old harbour town of Parthenope situated two miles from Naples; it implies that his previous life has failed to bring him satisfaction, that he feels shame of having written unclean verse, and for the future is resolved to think purely and write rarely.

CHAPTER IV

EPICUREAN DAYS

THE period included in this chapter extends from the spring of the year 45 B. C. to the latter part of the year 42, altogether slightly more than the triennium between Virgil's twenty-fifth and twenty-eighth years. The previous date is fixed in a general way by the fifth poem of the *Catalepton*, the farewell to the Forum, which makes it clear that his retirement was due to purely personal reasons, which would not have been the case after the murder of Julius Caesar in the spring of 44. It is fixed more specifically by the opening passage of the *Ciris*, which was promised to Messalla before the author left the city and completed,[1] if ever it was thought to have been completed, after his withdrawal and while his freind was studying in Athens. Now we know from a letter of Cicero that Messalla was about to set out for Greece on 28th March, 45.[2] Moreover, since it may be presumed from the *Ciris* that Messalla was witnessing the Panathenaic festival, which took place toward the end of July, we may infer that Virgil was by midsummer well established at Naples, and had arrived there some time earlier. Romans usually dispersed to their summer houses in June, but the poet and his family, since they were contemplating a permanent residence at Naples, and not merely a *villeggiatura*, may have migrated before the customary season. At any rate, we may be fairly certain of the previous part of the year 45.

The later limit of this triennium is, of course, the calamity of the Mantuan lands and the subsequent composition of the *Eclogues*, which belongs to the following period. Now Probus says that Virgil began the *Eclogues* when he was twenty-eight years of age, and he would have been counted as twenty-eight years of age until his twenty-ninth birthday, 15 October.

[1] *Ciris*, 9 'non tamen absistam coeptum detexere munus'.

[2] *Ad Att.* xii. 32, 2.

41 B. C. Other considerations incline us to believe that this extension of the triennium is justifiable. From the eighth poem of the *Catalepton*, addressed to Siro's villa, we glean that a period of suspense intervened between the first rumour of the threatened loss and its confirmation:

Si quid de patria *tristius* audiero.

The news that their lands might possibly be taken would be sad enough, but the assurance that they would certainly be taken would be looked forward to as infinitely sadder, and this was the anxious prospect when the poem was written. To this inference may be added the well-known fact that the tedious process of surveying and assigning the territory of Cremona must have gone on for some weeks or even months before it became apparent that additional confiscations would be needful.

The veterans were hard to satisfy, and the labours of the commissioners were undoubtedly interrupted by the Perusine War, so that Virgil may even have been compelled to wait until the year 40 for a real settlement of his claims. We believe this to have been the fact, and shall discuss the evidence more fully in the proper place. However, we choose to conclude the Neapolitan period with the point of time when the poet's anxiety began. This will fall in the latter part of the year 42, and before the return of Octavianus from Philippi in January, 41.

This triennium began with a happy year of Epicurean quiet to which we owe the *Moretum*, *Copa*, and the *Priapeans*, probably composed for the comfort and amusement of the author without thought of publication; to the same year belongs the *Ciris*, a labour of duty, promised before the farewell to Rome, and completed against the will of Minerva. Shortly after the assassination of Julius it seems that Virgil obeyed the call of Octavianus to the Caesarians to assemble in the capital, as the incident of *Sic vos non vobis* leads us to believe. He probably continued there for many months, and during the time that Cicero was delivering the *Philippics* he joined in the campaign against Antony by attacking two of his henchmen, Tillius Cimber and Ventidius Bassus.[1]

[1] *Catalepton*, ii and x.

With the formation of the triumvirate late in the year 43 we find the poet entering upon that period of desperate immersion in science to which we owe the *Aetna*, a seclusion from which he was rudely awakened by the prospect of the confiscations. The close of this triennium is marked by the eighth poem of the *Catalepton*, addressed to Siro's villa, and full of pious anxiety for the future of his parents.

We begin with an item of particular significance for the understanding of Virgil's life and thought. He is never a solitary figure. His very name stands for friendship. His retirement to Naples is no more a solitary resolve than his migration from Mantua to Rome. By nature he loved peace and quiet, and he hated envy, petulancy, and vindictiveness,[1] but when he turned from the strife of the capital he was not intending to retire from the world. He was seeking a different world in which he could be happy. He could not be happy alone. The migration to Naples was a group movement just as the migration of Messalla, the younger Cicero, and Horace to Athens was a group movement. One does not need to prove the latter. It is common knowledge that Brutus went to Athens to recruit the ranks of his officers.[2] It was natural for him to do so just as it was natural for the allied belligerents in the Great War to go to the universities. In such centres high spirits and intelligence are usually available. In Naples, however, men of a different spirit assembled. Virgil himself had 'done his bit' in 49 and was no longer fit for military service.[3] Of Varius, Tucca, and Varus we know less, but they were certainly of that Epicurean company. It is likely that Siro with his whole school of converts migrated in a body. Epicureans were never hermits, and believed they would realize the life at which they aimed only in families. We are not in these statements speaking quite at large. Cicero in his *De Finibus*,[4] writing in 45 at the very time that we place the retirement of Virgil to Naples, though the fictive date is 50, speaks of movements going on among the Epicureans: 'What hosts of friends did Epicurus entertain under a single roof, and that but

[1] Ascon. in Don. auct. 65.
[2] Plut. *Brutus*, 24.
[3] *Catalepton*, xiii. 1–4.
[4] i. 65.

a small one, and in what marvellous unanimity! This is actually going on to-day among the Epicureans.' Cicero says *nunc*. He does not say 'in Italy' nor 'at Rome', but when we have the evidence of Probus and of Catalepton v, and recall the emphasis placed upon fraternal life by the sect in question, why should we assume that he is speaking of distant and foreign parts? Probus plainly states that our poet lived for many years in cultured leisure following the sect of Epicurus and living in ideal harmony with Varius, Tucca, and Quintilius Varus.[1] Why not connect this information with Cicero's evidence and the *Catalepton*? Much is taken for granted in history upon no better data.

This, in Virgil's reading, is the Theocritean and Lucretian period. His very life is Theocritean. Not only does he appear to have been in Sicily during the winter of 44, when the eruption of Aetna, described in his poem of that title, took place,[2] but his very frame of mind is marked by pastoral idleness and detachment. He is living a care-free, though not aimless, existence, loafing and lounging in pleasant haunts, mingling with simple folk, and drinking in with his eyes the beauty of sea, flower, and tree, a wholesome reaction from the intense life of the capital. Then, after some months of active participation in the initial struggles between the young Caesar and Antony, followed dark Lucretian days, when the very sun in heaven seemed to have failed, and the whole creation groaned and laboured. To the solace of science he turns in desperation. He saturates himself with Democritean wisdom. He almost becomes a fanatic. Yet in the end he emerges a plain Epicurean, celibate, abstemious, moderate in all desires, devoted to pleasant speculation, delighting in intellectual friendships.

This period, it may be added, saw the inception of the Augustan literary circle in the school of Siro, and the charter members were Virgil, Varius, Tucca, and Quintilius Varus.

[1] *Vita*, p. 43, Diehl.
[2] *Geo.* i. 472 'Vidimus undantem ruptis fornacibus Aetnam'. Serv. ad loc., quoting Livy. Appeal to evidence of the eyes in *Aetna*: 178, 330, 449.

The ribald school of Anser, Bavius, and Maevius remained with Antony. Cornificius, a perverse genius, played a lone game and died.

The total amount of information that we possess concerning the sojourn of Virgil in the Campanian region is not very great, but it derives from good sources and permits of plausible inferences. Suetonius asserts that although the poet possessed a house at Rome adjoining the gardens of Maecenas, he preferred the solitude of Campania and Sicily.[1] His word for solitude is *secessus*, and a consistent usage defines its meaning. The island of Capri was *secessus* to Augustus in his last illness, and still more the neighbouring islet of Apragopolis, an Epicurean name that we may render in Latin by *Tranquillopolis*.[2] One may compare the Epicurean name of the villa of Vedius Pollio on the opposite mainland, the modern Posilipo, *Πανσίλυπον*, in French, *Sans-Souci*. Vedius, however, was an Epicurean of a different stamp. To return to our theme, Horace was *in secessu* at his Sabine farm [3] and Tiberius went into exile at Rhodes under the pretence of retirement, *specie secessus*.[4] Thus it is plain that the term denotes a complete removal from active life, from the turmoil of politics and the irksome intrusions of curious or uncongenial friends.

In using Suetonius as an authority it must, of course, be kept in mind that his keenness for details is joined to a singular lack of perspective and, in his desire to write a concise biography arranged upon topical principles, he disarranged events with a dismaying nonchalance. Imagination he quite lacked as well as any adequate conception of the development of a man's mind and the gradual progress of his fortunes. He was thinking of Virgil as the poet of mature genius and ripe fame, nor did the years of the poet's obscurity attract his interest or stimulate his curiosity. It is obviously of the later life of the poet when information was abundant that he writes, and the retreat to which he makes reference was doubtless Sorrento. We learn of this from the poet himself. In the last poem of the *Catalepton*, written partly for his own solace and partly to

[1] Don. 13.
[2] Suet. *Aug.* 98.
[3] Suet. *Vita Hor.* p. 298, Roth.
[4] *Annals*, i. 4.

record his vow, shortly before his last and fatal journey, we find these lines :

> Adsis, O Cytherea. Tuos te Caesar Olympo
> et Surrentini litoris ora vocat.

It is not likely that Virgil occupied this villa at Sorrento for more than the last ten years of his life. Yet he lived in Campania altogether for about twenty-five, keeping well towards the frontiers of Roman exploitation.

To make this clear it is necessary to characterize in a general way the Campanian coast and the process of its exploitation by the Romans. The contact of Rome with Cumae, as the history of the alphabet proves, was very ancient, and Cumae was almost certainly the point at which the settlements of wealthy Romans on this coast began. It is not likely, however, that this movement commenced to assume very large proportions before the period of the Social Wars. Then it began to involve Baiae, Puteoli, Misenum, and points farther south, but it had not reached Naples until late republican days. Antonius, grandfather of the triumvir, had a villa at Misenum.[1] Lucullus was also there, but more famous was his sumptuous establishment in the western suburbs of Naples on the site of the modern Castel dell' Ovo.[2] That this little strip of shore was only exploited at this late date is also proven by the famous Augustan villa of Vedius Pollio on the height of Posilipo.[3] Still further evidence of the fact is the information that the Via Puteolana, connecting Naples with Puteoli by the lower route, as opposed to the older Via Antiniana following the ridge above, was only put through by Augustus under the superintendence of Cocceius.[4]

Independent evidence for the correctness of our characterization of the Campanian shore is afforded by Cicero's letters. As early as the year 59 there was no solitude for the orator even at Formiae.[5] His home there had become a basilica

[1] Cic. *De Orat.* ii. 14, 60.
[2] Plin. *N. H.* xviii. 32; *Phaedrus*, ii. 5; the villa of Lucullus at Misenum had belonged to Marius: Plut. *Marius*, 34; Beloch, *Campanien im Alterthum*, pp. 81 and 198.
[3] Plin. *N. H.* ix. 167.
[4] Beloch, p. 83; Strabo, p. 245.
[5] *Ad Att.* ii. 14, 2; 15, 3.

rather than a villa on account of the multitude of callers. These were local citizens, of course, and consumed his early morning hours only, but later in the day he was not free from Roman bores. Infinitely worse was his villa at Cumae, which had become a veritable Atlantic City. *Pusilla Roma*, he calls it, so vast was the transient population during the height of the season. This was in the year 51 when on his way to Cilicia.[1] In the spring of 44 he sails over from his Pompeian villa to Puteoli and Cumae, ideal regions, he says, from many points of view, but wellnigh intolerable on account of the multitude of interruptions.[2] His Pompeian villa, on the other hand, seems always pleasing.[3] It was more distant but also more secluded. It is plain, therefore, that the transient population had not penetrated so far as this in his lifetime. We can thus infer that Sorrento was still unexploited even in the days of Virgil, a score of years later. Chosen as a place of exile for the lad Agrippa, the vulgar grandson of Augustus, it cannot be thought, even at the end of the century, to have been other than an undeveloped region.[4]

Naples itself, we must also bear in mind, was a small walled town, much like Pompeii, and not only stood back from the shore by as much as one thousand feet, and probably more, since the shore is known to be sinking beneath the sea, but was also distant from the harbour by as much as two Roman miles, or slightly less.[5] It is almost certain that the suburb at the harbour is what we are to understand by Parthenope. Of great consequence in ancient times, it seems to have lost its importance as overseas commerce was diverted to other ports, and Neapolis more and more came to depend upon the fertility of the local region for its prosperity. That Virgil's residence was in this suburb when he completed the *Georgics* is manifest from the closing lines of that poem:

> Illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat
> Parthenope studiis florentem ignobilis oti.

That Parthenope is to be associated with the harbour,

[1] *Ad Att.* v. 2, 2. [2] Ibid. xiv. 16, 1. [3] Ibid. ii. 1, 11.
[4] Suet. *Aug.* 65. [5] Beloch, pp. 75 ff.

the modern Porto Piccolo, is clear from Statius, *Silv.* iv. 4, 51 ff.

> En egomet somnum et geniale secutus
> litus, ubi Ausonio se condidit hospita portu
> Parthenope, tenuis ignavo pollice chordas
> pulso, Maroneique sedens in margine templi
> sumo animum, et magni tumulis adcanto magistri.

When Virgil says, therefore, that Parthenope was his home during the term of his labours upon the *Georgics*, we take him literally, and assume that he lived, not in Naples itself, but in the old harbour suburb. This must have become an abandoned place after the loss of the fleet in Sulla's time,[1] as we may infer from the fact that Lucullus could secure a site for his villa and fish-ponds at this very spot, the modern Castel dell' Ovo, in mediaeval times Castrum Lucullanum.[2] Moreover, we may venture to take Virgil seriously when he speaks of 'ignoble leisure'. The phrase hints at the existence of an Epicurean settlement in these parts. Since Epicurus at Athens bequeathed his garden to his followers, it is not inconceivable that Siro did the same, or it may have been that he left it to Virgil in trust. We may certainly read upon the authority of Asconius[3] that Virgil wished his friends to make themselves at home among his books, which may well include the library of Siro's villa, which the Virgils were expecting to occupy when the confiscations began to threaten.[4] This quiet suburb, easily recalled by visitors to modern Naples as the region of the little park and the aquarium, would have been an ideal retreat or *secessus* in early Augustan days. The construction of the Via Puteolana, including the rock-cut gallery, along this shore must have deprived it of all privacy, and this achievement of Augustan days may have driven Virgil to Sorrento.[5] In its former state this little strip of shore, the *geniale litus* of Statius, but popularly called *Plaga*, as the modern name *Chiaia* proves,[6] would have been difficult of approach from the populous Cumaean region. After the road was put through came dust, mud, and

[1] Appian. *B. C.* i. 89. [2] Beloch, pp. 81 ff. [3] Don. auct. 66.
[4] *Catalepton.* viii. [5] Beloch, p. 83. [6] Ibid., p. 84.

publicity.[1] Little wonder that Virgil forsook the neighbourhood of the family tomb for the quiet of Sorrento.

We are now enabled to understand also why Virgil should have lived at Sorrento but was buried within the second milestone of the Via Puteolana.[2] The family tomb must have been long established there. His father, who was still alive, though blind,[3] at the time when the calamity of Mantua was threatening, must have died soon afterwards in the villa of Siro. One easily arrives at this conclusion from the fact that the widow, who had borne the poet in 70, became by a second marriage the mother of a half-brother to Virgil, the same to whom he bequeathed the residue of his estate at death.[4] It is likely that the remains of the two full brothers [5] were also deposited in this tomb and at a later time the mother's.

It does not follow that Virgil did not possess other estates. At the time of his death his fortune amounted to about a million sesterces, and we may infer from the ode of Virgil that he took seriously the principle of Epicurus that the wise man will take care of what he owns and provide for the future.[6] A memorandum of Aulus Gellius affords evidence that he had an investment on the other side of Vesuvius in the vicinity of Nola, and that he had a disagreement over water rights in which he was worsted and deleted in consequence the name of this city from his poems.[7] We may imagine also that he kept his capital active by investing in other lands or by making loans. The ode of Horace distinctly implies that his business is interfering with his friendships. This, it may be assumed, is a cropping out of his inborn northern thrift, which happened to be quite consistent with the teaching of the sect to which he had attached himself. He was an Epicurean of the original school. His life was simple, abstemious, and prudent. One is strongly reminded of Atticus.

Altogether Virgil seems to have possessed four separate properties: first, a house at Rome adjacent to the gardens of Maecenas, which he rarely used; second, a house and

[1] Seneca, *Ep.* 57. 1, 2. [2] Don. 36. [3] Ibid. 14.
[4] Ibid. 37. [5] Ibid. 14. [6] *Odes*, iv. 12.
[7] A. Gellius, vi. 20; Servius to *Geo.* ii. 224, and *Aen.* vii. 740.

garden near the memorial of the Siren Parthenope, his favourite residence down to the time when he completed the *Georgics*; it was situated near the harbour and slightly less than two miles from the nearest gate of Neapolis. The third was the estate at Nola, probably an investment, and the last was a villa at Sorrento, to which he was driven by the publicity ensuing upon the construction of the Via Puteolana, as we may surmise. This inventory seems consistent with the statement that his fortune amounted to about one million sesterces.

Apropos of Epicureanism, we may draw yet another conclusion from the available information. Naples, towards the end of the first century of the Empire, had become a great centre of learning, and students flocked thither, as we learn from Statius,[1] not only from the adjacent parts of Italy, but also from the western islands and provinces. We suggest that the founders of this reputation were the philosophers Siro and Philodemus, and we may safely conclude that the general colour of Neapolitan learning was Epicurean, while Stoicism found a more congenial atmosphere in Rome itself, where it was more needed. Under the Republic, of course, the Stoic and Epicurean flourished side by side in the capital. On the other hand, from Seneca to Marcus Aurelius the literature of Stoicism is distinctly urban. Of Epicurean literature in this age, we may say there is none extant; but the sect, we know, continued to flourish for several centuries, and what can be more probable than the assumption that its home was under these sunny skies where Hellenism lingered and the very atmosphere invited to political detachment and friendly tranquillity? The rolls of Philodemus, discovered in the ruins of Herculaneum, bear out this hypothesis, and remind us that on this side of Naples the philosophy of Epicurus was a force in the year A. D. 79. The excavations now being undertaken there may afford fresh confirmation.

Upon this question of Epicureanism in the Neapolitan region we may pertinently raise the question why Cicero placed the scene of the dialogue on Epicureanism, the first two books of the *De Finibus*, in his villa at Cumae, and the scene of the

[1] *Silv.* v. 3, 162–72; Beloch, p. 56.

dialogue on Stoicism at Tusculum in the villa of Lucullus.[1] What can this indicate unless it be this, that the one philosophy was at home in the vicinity of the centre of Italian Hellenism, while the sterner philosophy belonged more properly to Rome and its neighbourhood? The time of the former colloquy is set back to the year preceding the beginning of hostilities between Pompey and Caesar, but this was inevitable for the reason that Torquatus had fallen in that war. The real date is 45, and the circumstances that impelled Cicero to choose this particular subject to employ his pen in hours of unhappiness must have been found in some crisis in the Roman schools. Cicero's instincts were journalistic, and he was moved by something then agitating the public mind to catch the interest of the reading public at the moment. It would seem as if the atmosphere of the capital had become extremely hostile to the Epicurean, and a movement of separation had set in which involved the poet Virgil with his friends and teacher. We happen to learn from Suetonius that Marcus Pompilius Andronicus, an Epicurean teacher from Syria, left Rome for Cumae, which hints again at some migration of Epicureans.[2]

[1] i. 5, 14; iii. 2, 7.

[2] *De Gram.* 8.

CHAPTER V

CIRIS AND CATALEPTON IX AND VII

THE *Ciris* is a little epic or epyllion of some 541 lines contained in manuscripts of the minor Virgilian corpus, and specifically noted in the copies of the Suetonian list preserved by Donatus and Servius. For these reasons, even if Suetonius neglects to indicate its contents, which he does for the *Culex*,[1] there is little doubt of its authenticity. With the *Culex* it may well be compared in one respect, that it occupies an analogous place in the progress of the author. The former we noted, on the basis of reliable evidence, may be judged to have been completed so soon after the arrival in Rome as to be regarded as a genuine product of the Cremona schools and the poet's adolescence. In like manner the *Ciris*, which the introduction shows to have been finished immediately after the author's retirement from Rome, exhibits to us what was uppermost in his mind and the focus of his poetical interests at the end of the second period of his life, when he was about twenty-five years of age. Again, as the *Culex* reveals the curriculum of a provincial school, so the *Ciris* reflects the tendencies of Roman poetry in the last decade of the republican régime. No radical line of literary influence or criticism has yet been thrown across the studies of the young Transpadane. He still drifts with his contemporaries.

The opening passage of the *Ciris* takes the form of a literary epistle of some ninety lines, which is self-explanatory and autobiographical to a gratifying degree. It is to be associated closely in date and circumstances with the fifth of the *Catalepton*, the joyous and melancholy farewell to the Forum and the muses. In the first lines of the *Ciris* we find the poet established in a little Epicurean garden and about to begin that study of philosophy in which he proposes in the poem of the *Catalepton* to take refuge from worldly cares. In the *Ciris*

[1] Don. 18.

he once more asserts his desire to cease the writing of verse and to offer repose to the muses just as in the *Catalepton* he had taken of them reluctant and affectionate leave. Only before he takes this momentous step he permits us to learn that he must complete a poem he had promised to his friend Messalla, doubtless the same Valerius Messalla who afterwards arrived at eminence as an orator, administrator, and patron of letters. From this we infer, by the way, that Virgil, the student, so far from passing his days in obscurity, had mingled in the best company of the time and secured a measure of recognition for character, talent, and promise.

The theme of the *Ciris* is a tragic erotic adventure of the Tarpeia type, and is paralleled by more than one of the stories extant in the collection of plots dedicated by the Greek Parthenius to Cornelius Gallus.[1] The scene is laid in Megara, the very city where Virgil was seized with the illness that ended in his death. When we recall the persistence of his smallest interests and the tenacity of certain attachments in his disposition one is almost tempted to the conclusion that his visit to Megara, which had no connexion with the *Aeneid*, was due to a desire to view the ruins of a city which he had long since roamed in fancy. Sentiment was powerful in his disposition, and he may have felt a desire he could not resist to linger on the scenes where the old hoary-headed king, with that grotesque lock of crimson on his crown, so carefully tended and fastened with the golden cicada, had met his absurdly tragic doom. He may have felt a whimsical desire to look down from the ruins of the battlements where the innocent Scylla, regarding the Cretan fleet on the shore below, was pierced by the dismaying shaft of Eros. Perhaps he rehearsed in his fancy the distraction of the hapless girl until her passion overcame her love for father and country and the stealthy shears snipped the lock of safety from her parent's crown. Perhaps he saw her in his fancy trailed in the wake of the victor's galley and surrounded by the monsters of the deep until the god took pity on her and turned her into a wild sea-bird to be pursued for ever by a winged Nisus.

[1] Nos. ix, xxi, and xxii.

In the development of Virgil's thought the *Ciris* is the antecedent of the Dido tragedy, just as the inferno of the *Culex* is the forerunner of the Sixth Aeneid, and it serves to exemplify the progression in his mental growth of which we spoke before. It permits of a division into just such topics as we find in the Fourth Aeneid.[1] The enamourment is brought about by the mischievous child of Venus and lightly passed over, but the distraction of the unfortunate maiden, likened as usual to bacchic frenzy, is dwelt upon at length, sometimes here and there in words that remind us of the *Aeneid*. The rôle of the nurse, wisely diminished to a minimum in the lofty tragedy of Dido, is here developed to such length as to involve a subplot, for Carme had already suffered at the hands of Minos. The tragic outcome takes the form of the familiar Tarpeia story, for Scylla is not carried off to Crete as a bride, but trailed as a captive at the stern of the victor's ship. The metamorphosis, described in truly Ovidian detail, serves to classify the poem decisively as an epyllion, for no tragedy could so conclude, and terminates the comparison with the Dido episode. It is only an exercise performed by one who for the moment desired to fulfil a promise, not the serious, responsible composition of one who was in intimate touch with men who had assumed the administration of empire and believed the shoulders of the poet to be ample enough to share a portion of their burden.

The introduction to the *Ciris* reveals a normal ethical advance over the *Culex*. The tendency to self-depreciation is again manifest, the hope of something great to be accomplished in the future, the inborn earnestness of purpose, the out-thrust of an eager, hungry, and capacious mind in its effort to separate the real gold of life from the dross of experience. As the *Culex* is replete with sheer pedantry and honest sentiment of a commonplace order, the natural content of the adolescent mind, so the introduction to the *Ciris* evinces the revulsion from learning of a trite and hackneyed content, the useless erudition of the bookworm tribe. In his desire for a more abundant life, for truth germane to living, for a searching knowledge of things that will be adequate to compensate for

[1] DeWitt, *The Dido Episode in the Aeneid of Virgil*, pp. 18 ff.

the unsatisfying fruits of fame, and at the same time to dispel the forces that make for human misery, he is turning to physical and moral philosophy, hoping to mount to the very summit of wisdom's citadel. Disappointed in the Forum he is no longer content with a conventional estimate of happiness, and has recourse to scientific reason with an easy confidence of discovering by her aid the true antidote to care and the unfailing source of comfort. The Roman boy has become self-conscious, has enrolled himself as a catechumen of Epicurus, eager to learn the certainty of those things wherein he has been instructed.

In respect of his literary ambitions he is precisely where he was when he wrote the *Culex*. To use his own words, he is distracted by conflicting passions. When he came down to Rome for the first time his heart was divided between Parnassus and the Forum, between the love of poetry and the craving for a career. When he was cured of his forensic ambitions he bade farewell to the muses, but only a lover's farewell, half-conscious that of his own accord he would once more seek their company. Into the place, however, of the old dreams of worldly success has come the passion to unravel the skein of existence, to have nature beneath his feet. He is distracted no less than before. He is not in the same absolute, but he is in the same relative position as before. He is still seeking happiness, but not the same happiness. The difference lies in this, that the call of wisdom has exorcized the call of the world, and the language of his imagination has changed. From the sheltered quiet of the Cremona schools he plunged into the erotic society of the capital, rife with scandalous intrigue and amorous sentiment. The chanters of Euphorion held the stage and the young Transpadane joined in the applause and drifted with the crowd. Of this era the erotic epyllion of Scylla is a characteristic product. The poet has passed from one normal literary interest to another just as he passed from adolescence to manhood, and from the rhetorician's circle to the Epicurean garden. His progress is regular, both from the point of view of human nature and from the circumstances of his time, but he stands relatively where he stood some ten years before, drawn asunder

by incompatible desires. He would be a poet and a philosopher too. This monstrous frame of mind was to continue until he had written the *Aetna*, which marks the climax of a mind at war with itself.

The *Ciris* is the more significant as the workmanship is unconcealed and the method of the author made plain. To write this little thing, it is clear that Virgil spared no pains to assemble, search, and analyse the whole corpus of his authorities from Homer down to Euhemerus and Pachynus. He puts together all the Scylla legends, all the various interpretations, and arrives in his own mind at a verdict. There is just one true Scylla, the Scylla of Megara, and all the other legends and allegories are sheer fictions.[1] This presents to us the poet as a thoroughgoing scholar. Some twenty-five years later he set in to compose the *Aeneid* after a like manner. He assembled such a library for this purpose and flung his researches over so wide a field that he felt forced to admit in his famous letter to Augustus that he must have been beside himself when he undertook the task.[2] At that time, of course, all the powers and passions of the man had been co-ordinated, his Roman sentiment, his Italic sentiment, his love of romance, his interest in antiquity, and his mastery of rhythm and diction. When he wrote the *Ciris* he was only a part of himself, only a Hellenistic versifier, still working under the old republican system of Lucullus and Archias, a noble patron and a humble client. As an exercise the labour of composition was perhaps beneficial, but the social position was dangerous.

The metamorphosis[3] in the *Ciris* deserves a passing notice as marking the stage of Virgil's progress at the moment. He is quite orthodox in the use of it. This is precisely the sort of transformation that was described to exhaustion by Ovid in the later Augustan age. Ovid, it may be noted, is not a real Augustan. He carries on the republican tradition that was suspended for a generation in the closer and more intensified technique of the inner circle. In the *Aeneid* we find no orthodox use of metamorphosis. The magic figure of Fama in the fourth book will recur to the mind. She changes her size, like Alice

[1] Lines 89–91, Ellis. [2] Macrobius, i. 24, 11. [3] Lines 490 ff.

in Wonderland, but not her figure or colour. One will think of Allecto becoming the aged priestess of Juno for dramatic reasons, of the Dira in the twelfth book taking the form of the owl, and lastly of the ships of Aeneas transformed into Nereids. These metamorphoses are integral parts of the motivation, quite subordinate to the story, amd most of them are allegorical. When Virgil writes the *Aeneid* his stores of learning are co-ordinated and subordinated. He is no longer merely sketching details. He is concerned with the whole. When he wrote the *Ciris* he was but a *dimidiatus Vergilius*.

Virgil himself considered the *Ciris* to be a relic of his apprenticeship, and wished it to be suppressed. The reasons are not far to seek. It is really less Roman and less Virgilian than the *Culex*. The Virgilian element is the interest in the erotic story that culminated after many years in the romantic tragedy of Dido. Yet, this feature being set aside, the piece is simply an academic exercise. The treatment is thin and quite without those second depths, that manifold allusiveness which characterizes his major works. The style, not quite so prosaic as in the *Culex*, abounds in Greek words, in unconcealed anaphora, and in amateurish devices. It lacks the magic touch of the colloquial, the rich diction, and the measured dignity of the genuine Virgilian verse. It represents Virgil the Hellenistic versifier just as the *Culex* represents the promising alumnus of the Cremona schools. The truth is that Virgil is temporarily stranded between the passing of the old republican régime and the inception of the new imperial society. The tie with Messalla holds him loosely to the one, and the other has not come into being. Nothing has happened as yet, and nothing could happen, to shock him into the realization of his genuine passions, his Italian sentiment, his imperial sentiment, and his opportunities and obligations as a member of the new order. He is stranded between the ebb and the flow of the tide.

When Virgil wrote the *Ciris* he was still far from Parnassus and from Fortuna's shrine, farther in point of progress than of years. Various essentials were lacking as yet to the beginnings of success, a severe and candid criticism of his diction, a perception of the elements out of which the charm of his language

was to grow, an occasion calculated to quicken his erudition and shock the unassembled riches of his sentiments into order and activity, and a congenial atmosphere in the world at large. Patrons he did not need, either temporally or temperamentally. Too much emphasis has been placed upon the importance of patronage in this epoch. Republican patronage had produced nothing of consequence. Neither Catullus nor Lucretius, to whom we owe the sole legacies of those years, fared well at the hands of their contemporaries. It was patronage that the Augustans escaped and combated. The old colleges of poets had been subservient. The new academy is in the mastery, and was quite as necessary to the court as the court was to it. It performed a service but served in a way of its own choice. Virgil, as the first and most courageous member of it, the man of the most inflexible tenacity and the most ample conceptions, is its chief. He is the *princeps poetarum*. At a certain stage in his career the friendship of Messalla must have been particularly gratifying, but the young nobleman lacked the greatness to command his services. We possess no information that would lead us to regard him as other than a high grade of an average type of Roman aristocrat.

Messalla would have carried over into the coming era the republican system of patronage and the mediocre standards of republican poetry. The old type of aristocrat was possessed of a more than wholesome self-esteem and a desire for personal adulation that inevitably reduced his poet friend to the condition of the humble client. Such a system could never be expected to elicit a perfection higher than the versified panegyric in the domain of the epic nor better than an academic exercise in the epyllion. A literary situation of that kind by its very nature excluded all sweeping and exalted conceptions and sentiments of empire, the whole range of ideas that would be acceptable to the dominions at large. At the same time it made for mediocre standards of poetic technique. The number of extraordinarily gifted men is never at any moment very large, and to dissipate them among a multiplicity of patrons is to set an easy gauge of success. In the year 45 our poet knew only republican patronage, republican standards, and

only personal sorrow. The conditions required to elicit his full powers under the compulsion of an exacting environment had not come into existence.

The ninth poem of the *Catalepton*, although written some sixteen years later than the *Ciris*, may best be considered here for the reason that we may call it an anachronistic work of Virgil, having been composed at a later date under the influence of a friendship that never really developed in conformity with the principles of the new society that grew out of the Neapolitan Epicurean circle that preceded the larger circle of Virgil and Horace and their numerous associates. Its date is fixed by recognizable retrospective references to the *Eclogues*,[1] and by the implication that the career of Messalla has reached a climax.[2] Thus it belongs in point of time to the period of the return of Octavianus from the task of settling the affairs of the East subsequent to Actium, when it also happens that the career of Messalla reached its highest point of achievement. Its elegiac form, as we shall endeavour to demonstrate in another place, gives reason to suppose that it was written without serious intention of publication, and therefore we discuss it briefly along with the *Ciris* for the sake of its autobiographical interest.

As poetry these elegiacs merit but little if any praise. The muse was not with the poet when he wrote them and Minerva was still more averse than when he worked upon the *Ciris*. The German editor Birt has gone to some trouble to prove that the poem is not Virgilian in style, but this is supererogation. Virgil himself did not consider it Virgilian and did not wish it to be included in his published works. He classified the piece as one of the pots that was warped in the burning and we probably owe its preservation to Varius and Tucca, who, being sympathetic executors, realized the interest of posterity in all the genuine documentary evidence of the poet's life and art.

For their autobiographical content these lines are really precious. The embarrassment they reveal is distressing. The author, who by this time thoroughly knows himself and upon

[1] Lines 13–20. [2] Lines 3–6; 41–54.

what terms the muse will visit him, is pressed by an old and aristocratic friend to write in the manner of the late republic an epic poem upon his exploits. Friendship, admiration, and gratitude urge him to comply. Self-knowledge, hard-won convictions, and bitter experience cry aloud that it cannot be. How could the Transpadane, who had come down to the capital some twenty-five years before with his heart full of dreams of a conspicuous career as an orator, soldier, and administrator, expect to ply the stylus with enthusiasm upon achievements of the very kind that he had coveted for himself? Virgil was no Archias, no immigrant man of letters. He was a Roman with all the Roman's self-esteem. Friend and adviser of the great he could and did become, but never the complacent client of even a most outstanding nobleman.

The German editor is much concerned by the lack of mention in this poem of Messalla's oratory, for which he was admittedly famous, but must we not recall that Virgil remembered bitterly the fickle herd and allows the ignoble Drances to stand for the orator in the *Aeneid*? Must we not recall that oratory was under a cloud among the Augustans and Cicero's name almost taboo? Who does not know that Cicero was read but surreptitiously in the imperial household and that praise for oratory must inevitably recall the eloquence of the great proscribed? Both for personal and for social reasons to touch upon that topic was to tread upon smouldering embers. Besides, Messalla had manifestly asked for a poem upon his wars and not a panegyric upon his speeches. The German editor is logical but not reasonable.

Messalla is praised for his Greek bucolics, written long before, and the interesting fact is admitted that some few verses of the same had found their way into the *Eclogues*, lines 13–14:

> Pauca tua in nostras venerunt carmina chartas,
> carmina cum lingua, tum sale Cecropio.

Since these lines are not identified by the ancient commentators and Messalla's name is not mentioned in the *Eclogues*, for the excellent reason that he had chosen the side of Brutus and Cassius, we can only suspect their presence in the First, Seventh,

or Ninth Eclogues, where the names Meliboeus and Moeris occur, to which we are pointed by lines 17–20 :

> Molliter hic viridi patulas sub tegmine quercus
> Moeris pastores et Meliboeus erant,
> dulcia iactantes alterno carmina versu,
> qualia Trinacriae doctus amat iuvenis.

We certainly glean from this the interesting information that the opening line of the First Eclogue derived from Messalla, and we are tempted to the suggestion that a passage of the ninth is an excerpt from the same source, lines 39–43 :

> Huc ades, O Galatea ; quis est nam ludus in undis ?
> Hic ver purpureum ; varios hic flumina circum
> fundit humus flores ; hic candida populus antro
> imminet, et lentae texunt umbracula vites.
> Huc ades ; insani feriant sine litora fluctus.

The context shows it to be a quotation and the scene is Sicilian. It is matched in an amoebaean setting with a passage of Virgil's own composition containing an explicit reference to Caesar's star, an example of that pairing of local and personal allusions with the mythological or remote which is characteristic of the *Eclogues*. Galatea may well have been the heroine referred to in lines 21–2 of the panegyric :

> Certatim ornabant omnes heroida divi,
> certatim divae munere quoque suo.

She was the daughter of Nereus and Doris and was changed into a fountain. A more proper heroine of pastoral cannot be found. This conjecture is consistent with the occurrence of her name in the Seventh Eclogue, where the presence of Meliboeus furnishes the clue. Lines 37–40 :

> Nerine Galatea, thymo mihi dulcior Hyblae,
> candidior cycnis, hedera formosior alba,
> cum primum pasti repetent praesepia tauri,
> si qua tui Corydonis habet te cura, venito.

These two passages, along with the first line of the First Eclogue, may constitute the borrowings of Virgil from the bucolics of Messalla.

Virgil's excuses for not essaying an epic are commonplace,

the same that were urged by Posidonius when pressed by Cicero for a poem upon his consulship ;[1] the very greatness of the subject is discouraging ; his deeds will constitute their own fame. The only bond that Virgil will recognize is the fraternity of the poetic craft. He will praise the verses of his friend but not his deeds. It is similar to the attitude that he assumes towards Alfenus Varus in the opening lines of the Sixth Eclogue, and the same that Horace assumes towards Agrippa in the sixth ode of the first book. The Augustans insisted upon being appraised and classified aright. They were obstinately combating republican standards and traditions. They had a perfect understanding among themselves, a sane and resolute unanimity upon sound principles, a judicious estimate of their several talents, and a wholesome endowment of personal dignity and self-esteem. They were true to one another and true to the canons of an informal academy.

The poem concludes almost brusquely and perhaps ambiguously with the words :

> Hoc satis est. Pingui nil mihi cum populo.

The words ' Hoc satis est ' at first blush seem to signify ' This poem is sufficient praise ', but the meaning must really be ' To praise you as a poet is enough '. The rest of this brusque line is significant of a settled trait of Virgil and the Augustans. It is another form of ' Odi profanum vulgus '. It is to be interpreted more closely by Horace's words, *Odes*, ii. 13, 30–2 :

> Sed magis
> pugnas et exactos tyrannos
> densum humeris bibit aure vulgus.

For Virgil these words express a settled conviction ; he cannot write to please the debased taste of the ignoble herd, but this determination is likewise an adopted principle of the circle to which he belongs and it constitutes a dividing line between republican and imperial taste. A sample of what the Augustans refused to write is preserved to us in the prosaic rhetoric of Lucan, but taste had rapidly declined. The middle of the first century was nearer in taste and in many phases of sentiment

[1] *Ad Att.* ii. 1, 2.

to the Ciceronian generation than was the Augustan age. The peak of taste and achievement was reached under Virgil and Varius.

A novel hypothesis has lately been put forward concerning this poem.[1] It is proposed that the moment of composition is to be identified as that occasion in early November, 42, when the initial defeat of Philippi, which took place twenty days before the decisive victory of the triumvirs, was reported in Italy. It looked like a republican triumph with Messalla, who captured the camp of Octavian, as its chief ornament, and Virgil hastened to greet his friend with a paean :

Victor adest, magni magnum decus ecce triumphi.

To this interpretation manifold objections arise both from the poem itself and from the historical associations. In the first place we must recall that at this juncture the first confiscations at Cremona would be in full swing and the poet, as the head of an opulent household, would doubtless be on the spot and close to the head-quarters of Pollio, legate of the triumvirs. Can we think of him for one instant as playing a double game ? Assuming that he received the report, we prefer to think of him in a frame of mind more likely to call forth the *Dirae* than a paean of victory for the friend who had humiliated Caesar's heir and his youthful hero. The poem, if written at this time, was a terrible blunder and ought to have found its way to the flames. It wrecks the consistency of Virgil's loyalty, of which the minor poems seem to have been preserved as a record, and it upsets the only principle upon which we can explain their survival when so many others must have been destroyed. These pieces can demonstrate only one thing, that Virgil was always a pro-Caesarian whether Caesar was Julius or Octavianus.

From within the poem itself arise various absurdities. First, the words ' Victor adest ' may be taken literally in 27, but only by a violent prolepsis in 42. Secondly, Messalla is spoken of as preferring the camp to the Forum :

castra foro, te castra urbi praeponere castra.

[1] Frank, *Vergil, A Biography*, pp. 89 ff.

In this epoch, however, our hero, whose name was on the first proscription list, would hardly have found the city and the Forum, where everything was in disorder over the confiscations, a happy or attractive sphere of activity. About this time a son was born to him, the same to which the poem refers, line 44 :

tam procul hoc gnato, tam procul hac patria.

Can we imagine a poet suggesting to a young and martial aristocrat that he should remain at home because there was an infant in the house ? On the other hand, in the year 27, when the poem was probably written, the boy would have been of an age to take the toga, a great occasion in the Roman family, and so was appropriately mentioned. Moreover, in the preceding years, when Messalla was campaigning by preference in the interests of Octavianus, the education of the lad might have been a reasonable motive for remaining at home. Also significant is the reference to a British war, lines 53–4 :

nunc aliam ex alia bellando quaerere gentem,
vincere et Oceani finibus ulterius—

From Horace, *Od.* i. 35, 29, and other passages we know that Augustus was contemplating such a campaign. This was in the year 27, when he went to Gaul, and what general was more likely than Messalla to be his chief of staff ? To these specific objections may be added the steady assumption in the poem that the hero's career has reached a climax after many wars on land and sea and that the poet has been importuned for a tribute ; lastly, we must take note of the manifest feeling of reluctance and tone of apology, particularly noticeable in the opening and closing passages, which are inconsistent with the assumption of a spontaneous praise.

Messalla, as an aristocrat and a former member of the party of Brutus and Cassius, was more of a republican than an Augustan. It was his great misfortune to have been born at the capital and not to the north of Rome. He changed his loyalty but in his person the republican literary tradition is carried on into the Augustan era. There is nothing abnormal about his career except his political conversion. He was an

orator, soldier, and administrator just like the normal intellectual aristocrat under the late régime. He made an effort to detach himself from tradition by denying connexion with the first consul Valerius Publicola.[1] This association must have become a danger and an embarrassment to him, just as the name of Brutus had carried fatality to its owner. At what date he disclaimed the relationship we do not know. It was certainly later than this poem of Virgil's, which probably falls in 27 B.C. So long as the aristocratic party had a leader of acknowledged pre-eminence in Antony it is not likely that seditious proposals would be whispered in the ear of a Valerius Publicola, but after 27 B.C., when Octavianus became Augustus and princeps, the secret conspiracy began to be a menace, and we suggest that after this date Messalla made public his disclaimer. Consequently we are not bound to feel that the incident has any bearing upon the eulogy of his *gens* to be found in this poem.

Virgil's friendship with Messalla is an embarrassing survival of the days when he did not know himself and could not know himself. The environment in which his talents came to fruition and his nature realized what measure of happiness was possible for him in this world had not in the late Julian days come into being. It was only beginning to exist in those days when the little circle of congenial spirits assembled at Naples. Virgil was still doomed to much floundering and mistaken expense of strength. He had still to write the unhappy *Aetna* and still, in the interests of self-preservation, to throw himself upon the friendship of men like Alfenus Varus and Asinius Pollio, who, having gone to school under the old régime, were incapable of quite fitting themselves into the new. It was the poetic group in that new society that drew its plans and laid down its principles, that gave it cosmic interpretation. We are inclined to believe that they inspired Octavianus quite as much as his tenacity and energy stimulated them. Roman oratory came to its artistic perfection at an earlier date than Roman poetry, but Roman oratory never offered but a sordid interpretation of Roman imperialism. We do not see why it should have

[1] Plin. *N. H.* xxxv. 8.

so fallen short, but the fact remains that it did. Orators like Pollio and Messalla carried on that narrow oratorical tradition, and by the defect of this circumscription their friendship was of necessity embarrassing to Augustan poets. The self-denying friendliness of the humble Epicurean was more profoundly enlightening and more productive of good for the world in a literary way than the pompous individualism of the intellectual aristocrat.

It is quite possible that neither the *Ciris* nor Catalepton ix ever reached the hand of Messalla. Such an event would have constituted a sort of publication, and at least in 27 B.C., when Virgil was already famous, the issue might have proved irrevocable. It is more likely that the author never looked upon either one as a finished work and preserved them only for his personal satisfaction. If he would have burned the *Aeneid* what would he have done with these elegiacs?

Although the *Ciris* may never have been consigned to Messalla it almost certainly fell under the eyes of Varius, a partner in the pleasant retirement of Naples, who was destined to play no minor rôle in the task of making a real poet of Virgil, and in particular of driving home to his conscience the necessity of stricter standards of diction and taste than had ever prevailed under the waning republican tradition. In truth, as we believe, the turning-point between the old and the new, between the multiplicity of patronage under an aristocratic social system of many heads and consequently characterized by mediocre standards of literature, and the new imperial circle dominated by a single personality and supported by a court made up of able ministers devoted wholeheartedly to the promotion of a vast programme of just, unselfish, and benevolent administration, falls in those days when a little group of absolutely honest men, disappointed men perhaps, withdrew from the turmoil of the capital to seek relief and comfort in pleasant intellectual converse near the Italian centre of Hellenism. Here they at the same time discovered themselves and laid the foundations of a new literature.

In this new and obscure academy one may observe the

elimination of the more mischievous influences of the day that was passing. Theirs is no easy-going contented Hellenism devoted to the pleasure of some vain, complacent patron, giver of good dinners and bestower of coveted praise and sesterces, or at best an indifferent critic duly permitted to take himself too seriously. These men are frank and candid friends, lovers of the naked truth, and the old Greeks are no longer required to furnish merely the model and the content of poetry ; they are invited to supply the severest canons of taste and the exactest measures of precision. When Virgil undertook to compose the *Ciris* he was in grave danger of entangling himself in the older system, of becoming the client of an intellectual aristocrat of an average sort. When he worked upon the *Ciris* he was just a Hellenizing versifier engaged upon the task of acclimatizing a foreign species in a strange land to please a noble friend. At bottom, the friendship, no matter how genuine and delightful at the moment, involved an embarrassment no less hampering than the theme proposed was exotic. The relationship had nothing in it to call forth a great work and the subject promised but a moderate achievement. He was fortunate to escape so early in his career.

It was a momentous event in Roman literary history when Virgil bade farewell to the pedants and went down to dwell in the haven of Italian Hellenism, and it was an equally fortunate incident that the republicans withdrew to Athens. In the capital the two groups were interlocked through mutual friendships, as in the case of Virgil and the young Messalla, and under a normal progress of events the new movement might never have gained sufficient vitality to survive in the weedy exuberance of the older system. It might have been cut short after an imperfect bloom as the elegance and sincerity of Catullus had withered and died in the acrid atmosphere of a sordid and spiteful generation. It might have gone on like a voice crying in the wilderness, the fate of Lucretius, beating vainly on the ears of a self-satisfied, hypocritical orthodoxy. The efforts of Julius Caesar to reconcile insoluble elements of society, had they been capable of achievement, would have been fatal to literature. The spontaneous separation of society under

Antonius and Augustus was the making of it. One half, and the worse half, followed a man ; the other half followed a man and a great cause, though they may not have been aware of it at the moment.

It is recorded by Asconius that Virgil's library was constantly at the disposal of his friends,[1] from which we may assume that his scrinia were well filled. Otherwise why mention such a fact ? So we may assume that during his residence by the secluded old town of Parthenope there was a continual going and coming of congenial spirits. Indeed we are convinced that Virgil was a willing host though a reluctant guest. On one occasion we know that Horace spent the time and pains to compose an ode that his friend might be induced to leave his own fireside and occupations for another's board. To this specific evidence we may add the general consideration that Virgil was not only devoted to his books but also to his garden ; for in addition to the affectionate naming over of plants in all his works and the outspoken love of gardens in the *Georgics*, we regard the Priapean poems as genuine and thoroughly in character. And we have observed that just as men who delight in reading and in the accumulation of books prefer the proximity of their own Penates, so those men who love flowers prefer to be visited rather than to visit. For these reasons we should assume that the little villa by the old harbour of Neapolis was a well-trodden rendezvous of congenial souls, where that magic spell began to be woven over the hearts of contemporaries that eventually won for the friendly Transpadane a central place in a royal company.

On one of these occasions, it may have been, when Varius and Tucca dropped in upon the Virgils for a glass of wine and a pleasant hour, the new disciple of Epicurus brought out some verses in which he had employed the Greek word *πόθος* in place of *puer*. The Greek word, of course, signified rather more than *puer*, and the use of Greek words in Latin verse was thought to be pleasant in the Rome that Virgil had left,[2] but Varius thought differently and Varius was obdurate. ' When we write Latin ', we hear him insisting, ' it must be all Latin.

[1] Don. auct. 66. [2] Hor. *Sat.* i. 10, 20–1.

If we are ever to have Latin poetry of a high order it will not be half Greek.' Virgil's reply was the following epigram, No. vii of the *Catalepton*:

> Scilicet hoc sine fraude, Vari dulcissime, dicam:
> ' Dispeream nisi me perdidit iste *πόθος*.'
> Sin autem praecepta vetant me dicere, sane
> non dicam, sed ' Me perdidit iste *puer* '.

This quatrain we should place in the epoch closely following upon the composition of the *Ciris*, in which Greek words are freely admitted: *sophia*, *peplos*, *tropaeum*, *conchus*, *crobylus*, *styrace*, *coccina*, *crocota*, and others. It was evidently more difficult to win the approval of the Roman Varius than to please Messalla, the author of bucolics written in Greek.[1]

This epigram, trifling and slight as it seems, exemplifies the difference between the laxity of republican rules and the rigorous canons of the Augustans, and it reveals to us the position of Varius in the little group as an *arbiter elegantiarum*. His criticism was taken to heart and Virgil never erred in this direction again, and we fancy that in many another particular the candid friend and unsparing critic elucidated the rules of the new academy. Their intimacy endured to the last and well may we believe that Varius, who was primarily interested in the drama, showed to the younger man the secrets of that dramatic technique which prevails in the *Aeneid* to a far greater extent than epic technique, as we are rapidly coming to understand. We suspect that the rather amateurish conceptions of poetry and versification that Virgil had picked up in the intervals of rhetorical studies now begin to clarify themselves under the clear-headed instruction of the more precise tragedian. Great teachers may do great good to greater pupils even if they cannot rise to the same height, and Varius may have performed an indispensable service in the foundation of the school.

Between the earlier Catullan circle and the Neapolitan group of Augustans there was much in common: on the ethical side there was frankness and sincerity; on the technical side an aversion to copiousness and verbal embellishment joined to a particular care in metre and rhythm. The connecting link

[1] Cf. Prescott's review of Frank's *Vergil*, *Cl. Phil.* xvii. 3, p. 276.

between the two groups was Quintilius Varus, who, born about 75, had won before the death of Catullus an established place as a judge of verses.[1] He is consequently a veteran in the Neapolitan group and perhaps a more useful member even than Varius. Virgil is markedly reticent about his most intimate friendships. Of men like Pollio and Alfenus Varus, whose kindly interest it was to his advantage to gain, of Cornelius Gallus, whose more fluent genius and ample talents awakened his grateful admiration, we have sufficient and unambiguous mention. To Maecenas and Augustus are allowed sincere and unstinted praise, but of his nearest intimates hardly a word. It is from the consolation of Horace in *Ode* i. 24, that we know of his great attachment to Quintilius and from the last page of the *Ars Poetica* that we learn of the great pre-eminence of the lost friend as an unsparing critic. He seems to have been a protagonist in the war against mediocrity.

[1] Catullus, 22.

CHAPTER VI

COPA, MORETUM, AND PRIAPEANS

For the inclusion of the *Copa* in the minor Virgilian corpus we have the authority of manuscripts unimpaired by any anachronism or inconsistency in the poem itself. Moreover, its absence from our copies of the Suetonian catalogue is balanced by express mention in the grammarian Charisius.[1] Consequently we may justly seek for it a plausible place in a connected account of the poet's life, which is not a difficult quest.

In the interval of Caesar's absence in Egypt Virgil had joined in the campaign against Antony with a series of iambics, of which he preserved three, vi, xii, and xiii of the *Catalepton*. They were composed in the worst manner of Catullus, and the last of them, in particular, did not shun downright obscenity. We can understand his preserving the first two on account of their cleverness and the third from its autobiographical content, but the author bitterly repented of the vulgarity, and in his farewell to the Forum once and for all took leave of the unchaste muse :

> Ite hinc, Camenae ; vos quoque ite iam sane,
> dulces Camenae, nam fatebimur verum,
> dulces fuisti ; et tamen meas chartas
> revisitote, sed pudenter et raro.

Now in the *Copa* we find mention of the god Priapus, and Priapus invited the obscene, but Virgil expressly excludes it. Lines 23–4 :

> Est tuguri custos, armatus falce saligna,
> sed non et vasto est inguine terribilis.

From this it is plain that he is sensitive on the subject of his former lapses, and the resolution to be proper and pure is fresh in his mind. It cannot, therefore, be so very long since he took leave of the ribald muse of Catullus. This appears to be a

[1] i. 63, 10.

slight matter, but it marks a rift between the old and the new, and the inception of the relatively higher standards of the Augustan age, which produced a literature fit to be placed in the hands of boys, and clean enough to distract the affections of the Christian fathers. Virgil was not a loquacious genius and his mental reactions may have been slow, but we see him as one who was healthier, cleaner, and stronger than his contemporaries. There was about him an abundant endowment of Livy's wholesomeness, a common heritage of the north country which is not lacking even in Catullus with all his urban salacity. Of physical health he may have been uncertain, but his mind is sound ; his genius is prospective, and his age of gold is in the future. He had not lost his faith in goodness, nor in the gods, nor in mankind. He is the prophet and teacher of his time.

That the *Copa* belongs to the days of his residence at Naples is manifest from the evidence of the following lines, 13–16 :

> Sunt etiam croceo violae de flore corollae
> sertaque purpurea lutea mixta rosa,
> et quae virgineo libata Achelois ab amne
> lilia vimineis attulit in calathis.

Down the valley to the east and the south of Naples flowed the river Sebethus, much revered by the ancient Neapolitans, who adopted for the symbol of their coinage the figure of a bull with a human head,[1] probably the river god, whether the Achelous or the Sebethus makes no difference to us. A daughter of the river god, the nymph Sebethis, became by Telon of Capri the mother of Oebalus, the first king of Naples, who joined the muster of Turnus. *Aen.* vii. 733 ff. :

> Nec tu carminibus nostris indictus abibis,
> Oebale, quem generasse Telon Sebethide nympha
> fertur, Teleboum Capreas cum regna teneret.

The Teleboes, here mentioned, who settled Capri and afterwards Naples, came from Aetolia, and Sebethus, in Greek Σήπειθος, was reputed to be a son of the Aetolian Achelous. The river, therefore, of the *Copa*, from whose virgin waters the maiden has plucked the white lilies, will be the Sebethus, and

[1] Beloch, p. 36.

the whole myth is suggested to us in the name that Virgil gives to the maiden, *Achelois*. In confirmation of this it may be noted that Parthenope, whose worship was the most ancient in Naples, was one of the Sirens, and they were reputed to be daughters of Achelous. The ancient commentators,[1] not realizing how great a part the mythology of this region played in Virgil's imagination, were at a loss to explain why he mentioned the distant Achelous in the opening lines of the First Georgic:

poculaque inventis Acheloia miscuit uvis.

It is plain that he is here thinking, not only of Aetolia, but of the Sebethus and the famous wines of Campania. The *Georgics* reflect the surroundings in which he lived and worked. In the lines of the *Copa* above quoted we have a glimpse of the real Virgil and the abundant allusiveness of his mature works.

In order to visualize the Naples of Virgil's time we must think away the vast modern city with its miles and miles of squalid suburbs, and picture to ourselves in place of it an old, quaint Hellenic town, standing back from the shore and surrounded by stout walls.[2] Cool porticoes paralleled the sea in front of it, and the gentle waves broke pleasantly upon the *piaggia*.[3] From the lower gate ran the old road to the abandoned harbour, the tomb of Parthenope, and the ancient shrine of Aphrodite Euploia.[4] Here, at a distance of almost two miles from the new town, was situated the old city by the harbour, where Lucullus reared his sumptuous villa and excavated his notorious *piscinae*. The suburbs round about dissolve into little gardens and vineyards, with here and there a villa. The streets were dusty enough, or muddy, as modern visitors know well, and an ancient witness testifies,[5] but one might step aside and refresh himself in the dim coolness of the smoke-darkened tavern. He might pass through its dark corridors, as he may to this day, into pleasant arbours that defied the beating sun, and there sip his wine as slowly as he pleased. In place of the modern artist of the concertina and

[1] Macrobius, v. 18. [2] Beloch, p. 62. [3] Ibid., p. 77.
[4] Ibid., p. 83. [5] Seneca, *Ep.* 57. 1, 2.

the damsel who does the tarantella for a fee, one might have followed with eyes and ears the lithesome Syrian maiden with her rustling skirt of rushes and arms akimbo, while her comrade rattled the castanets. Virgil knew and revelled in that life.

Friends he had made in Rome and true friends, but from the dandy of the Forum and the young snobs of the aristocracy with their satire and ridicule he had fled as the wild bird escapes from the nets of the fowler. In this new world, so near the other and yet so different, he could relax the tension of life, unstring his ambitions, forget his cares, and snap his fingers at the morrow. The Virgil who lounged at ease in these arbours and watched the gay humours of a simple life was the same Virgil who sat by the board of the old Cilician gardener down by the streams of Galaesus.[1] Nothing human was alien to him. Here among the Greeks and Syrians he caught a new glimpse of humanity. He saw the artistic artlessness of it, and he sketched it for himself from sheer love of sketching, as an artist might do it to-day with palette and brush. Little did he think, no doubt, as he strolled in this land of always afternoon by the pleasant waters of the Sebethus, now no longer pleasant or visible, that the images with which his mind and fancy were enriching themselves and the cunning that his hand was gaining were part of the schooling for a task that once begun would only end with life itself. Men do not always realize when they are learning.

It is not difficult to find the place of the *Copa* in the poet's career. It belongs to the period when he was living in cultured leisure following the teaching of Epicurus. The worldly hopes he set his heart upon have turned to ashes. Selfish ambitions have now become a part of the past. On his shoulders rests the load of no burdensome responsibility. Not yet has the brazen finger of destiny marked him for conscript service in the vast new order of things. The shadow of no calamity darkens his bright hours. He is looking on at life. For the moment he is not part of it. For the studied Latinity of the Forum with its dry partitions of discourse, for the clamour of litigants and the bombast of the rostra, he has exchanged the prattle of artless

[1] *Geo.* iv. 125 ff.

Greeks. In place of clients waiting at the doors of the mighty and the sweep of togas through gazing crowds, he has exchanged the idle throngs of a happy little Hellenistic town of small shops and music and thoughtless gaiety. It is a little cosmos of theatres, palaestras, colonnades, taverns, and gardens. Life has become a diversion, the passions of the capital a memory.

The *Copa* falls in the first year of the author's residence in Campania, and must have been written before the Ides of March. He was never so tranquil in mind, never so carefree afterwards. He was happier, perhaps, when he penned the Messianic Eclogue, but the ecstatic buoyancy of that piece is due to the recoil from acute anxiety and protracted apprehension of public and private disaster. When the *Copa* came from his hand he was not yet a marked man. He was happy and contented in his obscurity. He was coming and going as he pleased, strolling unheeded through quaint streets and quiet countrysides. He was looking with that profound kindliness of his into the swart faces of those sons of Hellas, eating with them, drinking with them, talking with them. His gaunt figure and his rustic appearance, so different from the corpulent sleekness of the ordinary Roman pleasure seeker, must have made him a memorable figure in their streets. The Neapolitans came to know him ; they adopted him in a way and gave him a Greek name, Parthenias, as if we should say Priscilla, an evidence of their goodwill not less than their curious interest. To their easy morality his moderate, abstemious life was noticeable, and we welcome their testimony to his purity as a refutation of the vilifications that no ancient eminence could escape. He became one of them, but he did not adopt their ways.

These happy days, of course, could not last for ever. Before a triennium should have passed this humble acolyte of Epicurus was to be swept back into the main stream of events, and drawn into labours that ended only with life. In a few brief years he will no longer be the obscure singer of an idle hour passing unheeded along his accustomed ways, but the friend of the great, the intimate of a prince, and a favourite of Apollo and the whole chorus of Helicon. Then came the bore, the blatant seeker of favours, the envious rival, the vulgar curious, and the

annoying admirer. As Tennyson was compelled to give up his public haunts at Farringford for the greater seclusion of Aldworth, so Virgil was driven from the once adequate security of Naples and Parthenope to the still remote and unfrequented cliffs of Sorrento. It was there, no doubt, that he laboured to make poetry of an arid myth, and to fling a romantic glamour of antiquity over the new order, but he never lost his love of Naples. It was not the Neapolitans who had offended him with prying ways and impudent petitions. It must have been the increasing colonies of Romans and their clients who drove him forth. To his last day the lure of this Grecian shore, tinted with the golden aura of an immemorial past, exerted a strange pull upon his soul, and when the pitiless fever separated his mortal from his immortal part it was his last desire that his remains might rest where he had settled first in Naples, near the tomb of Parthenope, looking across to the grim profile of Capri and the rocks of the Sirens.

The *Moretum* is a true idyll or diminutive picture, with a certain weirdness and isolation about it, like the twenty-first of Theocritus, but without the dialogue. It takes its name from the making of the salad with which the description concludes, but this really comprises less than one-third of the 122 lines. What we really have is a series of pictures done with great precision and simplicity of line. The peasant Simylus, apparently a Graeco-Italian of Campania, rises from his rude bed in the pitchy darkness of the early morning, makes his way to the hearth, and kindles his lamp with vigorous blasts of his sturdy lungs. Then he flings open his doors and busies himself with grinding the grain for his daily bread, meanwhile singing in rhythm with the swing of his mill, and calling lustily to his solitary servant, a lean old negress. Presently the grinding and sifting come to an end, and the loaf is fashioned and deposited under a vessel upon the hearth that the woman has made ready. Next the garden is eulogized and finally we come to the mess of herbs, which is thoroughly macerated with mortar and pestle. Then, assured of food for the day, the thrifty Simylus goes to his ploughing with a light heart. The

sense of weirdness and isolation that pervades the piece is due to the loneliness of morning hours, to the silence of the negress, to the absence of wife or child, to the non-existence of a world outside. Virgil, the celibate, describes no family scenes. His heroines have no husbands and his heroes have no wives.

The *Moretum* is firmly enough entrenched in the manuscripts to demand a careful and sympathetic examination. Its absence from the Suetonian catalogue is not of decisive importance since we lack the original list, and cannot be sure either that it was ever complete or was not syncopated in later copies.

The text is also good and easily established, save for two separate lines. The first of these is line 15, for which Vollmer reads :

et reserat clausae quae pervidet ostia clavis.

This has been taken to mean that he unlocks the doors of a store-room which the key ' peeps through ', but one is tempted to believe that the letters of *casulae*, by the semantic attraction of *reserat*, have been transposed to form *clausae*, and then we shall have, reading *clavi* in the last place, ' and with his key he unlocks his cabin doors, which he sees with difficulty '. The darkness, it will be recalled, is profound.

In line 75 the books show a partial lacuna, but the extant portion is unsuspected.

. . . . crescitque in acumina radix.

From the context it is plain that some dainty vegetable of the rich man's table is in question, and from the hemistich it is equally plain that this is asparagus, which sends up a crop of spears. One will recall the *auspicium ex acuminibus*, when flames played about the points of spears thrust into the ground.[1] The similarity of asparagus shoots to the *hasta* or *thyrsus* of Bacchus was also commonplace to the ancients.[2] Of asparagus the stock epithets are *incultus*, *silvestris*, *montanus*, and *spinosus*.[3] Any of these would serve except the second, and we might read provisionally, feeling sure of *asparagi*, though not of the epithet :

spinosi asparagi crescitque in acumina radix.

[1] Cic. *Div.* ii. 36, 77. [2] Plin. *N. H.* xix. 146.
[3] Ibid. 145–51, xxi. 91 ; Mart. xiii. 21 ; Iuv. xi. 69.

It is to be noted that Virgil, in his etymologizing way, is suggesting the connexion of *asparagus* with *asper*. That this association may be false in no way vitiates an ancient, and still less a poetical, etymology.

On its ethical side the *Moretum* has a notable Virgilian content. The poet was always concerned with the question of thrift and economy, and we find him reproved for an excess of this virtue in the familiar ode of Horace. This peasant of the *Moretum* is a type of the Roman that Cato was prone to praise. Dominated by a vivid sense of the possibility of future want he is slow to purchase and quick to sell, *vendax non emax*.[1] Home from the city he returns to his cabin with light shoulders and heavy fists, lines 82–3 :

inde domum cervice levis, gravis aere redibat
vix umquam urbani comitatus merce macelli.

How ever present in Virgil's mind was this saving instinct is evinced by the recurrence of similar words in the Second Priapean and the First Eclogue :

meisque pinguis agnus ex ovilibus
gravem domum remittit aere dexteram.[2]

In the Eclogue it is the lack of thrift, line 35 :

Non umquam gravis aere domum mihi dextra redibat.

If these three passages are not by the same hand, then some nameless imitator must have peered deeply into the soul of the poet. We prefer to believe that all three bespeak the natural character of the northern farmer. Even in this minor trait the Mantuan is singularly Roman.

Viewed from another angle the *Moretum* exhibits an ethical penetration as piercing as the visual observation is sharp and meticulous. While we picture to ourselves the image of the stalwart peasant groping through the darkness to find his way to the fire, or shading the feeble flame of his lamp with the hand as he peers in the direction of the bolted doors, or seated by his mill as he plies now this hand, now the other, at his tedious task, keeping time to his labour with his song, we learn at the same time the soul of the man, his narrow circumscribed

[1] Cato, *Agric.* ii fin. [2] *Priapean*, ii. 12–13.

existence, his primitive, elementary instincts, his not unamiable fear of the future and foresight of need. Ethical lines are drawn in sharpest profile. What a contrast to the life and the world that Virgil had renounced! As those who have tasted of vinegar perceive more keenly the sweetness of sweets, so the Virgil who had haunted the streets of Rome, devoting himself to the pursuit of fame only to learn the hollowness and misery of the life of ambition, drinks in with supersensitive perceptions this picture of a humble, detached, and narrowly bounded being. Did he believe it to spell a genuine happiness? He has not told us.

Regarded from the viewpoint of art the *Moretum* is a masterpiece of its own class, a thumbnail sketch of great precision and fineness. It may have been the Alexandrians who for the first time isolated and exemplified the type, but when Virgil turned his hand to the practice of it he chose a problem cognate to his talent and experience. All excellence, we insist upon repeating when speaking of his art, must be conquered in detail, and Virgil saw the small things of life, and studied them, with an eager and meticulous notice. In these minor poems he seems to delight in pencilling them for their own sakes, like an itinerant artist sketching here and there a cathedral window or a doorway for its separate beauty, and for the moment he fell short of realizing, perhaps, in the pause of frustrated ambitions, that he was only garnering against the day of vaster, inevitable enterprises. Little did he think as he strolled, half conscious of the smouldering embers of disappointed hopes, in peaceful Campanian by-ways that even then the fates were roping off his path, and that a day was slowly and surely approaching when the little experiences of his life would become as stones for the head of the corner, that latent in his imagination lay vast conceptions that would exact of his fancy and memory the last farthing of tribute. The greatest work is made of little details.

The *Moretum* belongs in his happy Neapolitan days and keeps company with the *Copa*, wayside pictures of Campanian wanderings, novelties, we may well believe, to a Transpadane. They are done with the freshness of perception that only the unused eye attains. One feels in them the vigour of reaction

that comes only from original sensations. Yet not alone the eye and the vision is smitten. There is present at the same moment the ethical questioning of a spirit that is ill at ease, conscious of the postponement of vital satisfaction. Where is happiness? With just what measure of seriousness can we receive the moral of the *Copa*?

> Pone merum et talos. Pereat qui crastina curat!
> Mors aurem vellens 'Vivite,' ait, 'venio'.

This is but a passing, a momentary phase. Virgil is trying a maxim to find how it will sound in his ears. He is but an interpreter, not believing what he speaks, but wondering how it would feel to believe it. He is searching himself, and he is still searching himself in the *Moretum*. If happiness is freedom from pain and tranquillity is freedom from ambition, then is the peasant Simylus happy? Virgil imagines himself in such a life, and makes eminent success of his imagining, but he is merely trying on another man's cloak, knowing well it will not fit him. Yet in the experimenting there is much art and prettiness, and a tender, ethical pathos, a moral lingering that he never quite renounced even when destiny had driven him to more positive and responsible expression.

Mr. Mackail thinks highly of the *Moretum*, and his judgement carries much weight with us.[1] If the tone of the *Copa* is so unlike the poet as we know him that we are tempted to the paradox of believing it genuine, the very opposite is true of the *Moretum*. It is Virgilian in both manner and content. It stands in just such a relationship to the works of the major corpus as do the *Culex*, *Ciris*, and *Aetna*. Just as the scientific interests of the latter emerge in random paragraphs of the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*, as the slender romance of Scylla is a proleptic sketch of the Dido tragedy, and the puerile picture of the underworld in the *Culex* underlies the inferno of the Sixth Aeneid, so this little genre painting of the humble rustic grinding his grain and preparing his salad stands to his artistic mannerisms and outlook upon nature and man as we find them in later days. This peasant is to be classed with the old Cilician

[1] *Lat. Lit.*, p. 104.

gardener, with the poor woman of the Eighth Aeneid, who rises in the early morning to stave off want and poverty from her brood, with the hardworking ploughman of the *Georgics*. The *Moretum* abounds in that minute observation of things that must precede the attainment of maturity and the capture of the view of things in their ethical perspective. The part must be mastered before the whole. Virgil, the mature poet, is no mere botanist, scientist, agriculturalist, genre painter, mystic, philosopher, nor rhetorician, but he has been all of these in turn. In the final stages of his reflection the diversified acquisitions of his reading, observation, and pondering are sifted, unified, and subordinated to comprehensive schemes. The elements and symbols he chooses to employ derive their ultimate value from their place and function in the equation. Synthesis followed upon analysis. The minor corpus exemplifies the analysis, the major corpus is the synthesis.

In yet another respect the *Moretum* is significantly Virgilian. His visual observation in all his works is conspicuously sharp. In the *Aeneid* he was aiming at great conciseness, but his pictures, however small, are vivid and clear. We have pointed out in connexion with the *Culex* how the descriptions of serpents and their movements are abbreviated in the major works but always with outstanding realism. One might point out the picture of Fama in the guise of the peacock with her myriad eyes and ears, the brief glimpses of Allecto, the vignettes of the heroes in the seventh, as contrasted with Homer's catalogue, the Dira as an owl in the twelfth. To cite a larger passage, one might mention the visit of Aeneas to the site of Rome, a group of views sparingly selected but vividly sketched with a separate distinctness: the sacrifice by the *ara maxima*, the stroll along the Velabrum, the humble Regia, where the Trojan lodged, the cattle in the Forum, the swallows twittering above the bed of Evander. Can one forget the morning picture of the old king and his faithful dogs? Virgil saw clearly and with significant detail the scenes he chooses to describe. His interpretation of things is largely done with visual images coloured by ethical and patriotic sentiments. Auditive imagery plays a minor part as compared with the eye.

The *Moretum* reminds us most of Theophrastus. Regarded from this viewpoint it may be thought of as one of those distinct characterizations somewhat magnified in diameter. As the rules of rhetoric demand, there is no direct qualification of the subject. The writer simply rehearses for us what he does, how he acts, and we draw the inferences ourselves. Within the compass of a few lines we learn the type and class of the man, his ethical profile. Yet Virgil goes beyond Theophrastus. The latter detaches his types overmuch. They are shown for the most part without environment, while Virgil depicts for us the countryman in his own habitat, like a plant growing in the ground. We are made to see the interior of the cabin, the fireplace, the shelf by the hand-mill, the herbs hanging in bundles, the little garden outside, and the lone negress, his only companion. The ethical isolation is shared with Theophrastus, but the pictorial element, the constant appeal to the visual imagination, is Virgilian. The sketches of Theophrastus are done in black and white; Virgil gives touches of colour.

The *Moretum* raises the question, What did Atticism do for Virgil? It is, beyond all doubt, the purest example of Latin Atticism extant in either prose or verse. That Virgil was an Atticist we may be sure. We should infer it from his friendship with Quintilius Varus, the link with the school of Catullus and Calvus, and also from his unostentatious and retiring disposition. We may be certain of it from the *molle atque facetum* of Horace, from his own flaunting of Antony and the Asiatics in Catalepton v, and the ridicule of the absurdities of Tillius Cimber in No. ii of the same collection. Lastly, we may best understand the *Moretum* as a poetical essay in Atticism. Nowhere in Latin literature is there a specimen of such simplicity and directness of statement, such propriety of diction, and such immunity from figures of thought and syntax. Like Caesar's Commentaries, it exemplifies nakedness in art, comparable to the nude in sculpture, divested of all adornment. The acquisition and perfection of this style called for an habitual minuteness of observation coupled with a constant and severe appraisement of the colloquial idiom, the very qualities that we find in Virgil throughout. He was a product of Atticism. It was

the precepts of this school that drove home to him the necessity of the conquest of perfection in detail. His prettiest and most memorable phrases are composed of the tritest words to which by the *callida iunctura* he gave an extraordinary value. This was in later years, of course, yet a great phrase like ' Sunt lacrimae rerum ' is only the ripe fruit of the clean simplicity of the *Moretum*. Atticism is wholesome for beginners.

When Virgil voluntarily forsook the strenuous life of the Forum and renounced the ambitions that had proved to be incongruous with his talents and inconsistent with tranquillity of mind and personal contentment he seems to have retired directly to the school of Siro at Naples. The fifth poem of the *Catalepton* announces the departure without naming the place, but no compelling claims can be set up for a different locality. In the opening lines of the *Ciris*, which internal evidence shows to have been undertaken before leaving the capital and finished later, we find him established in a little Cecropian garden, which is in all probability the villa of Siro, a replica in miniature of the famous establishment of Epicurus in Athens. Since the founder of the sect had bequeathed his Athenian garden to his followers it is not impossible that Siro at his death had left to Virgil as a legacy the modest plot of land and his villa. At any rate we learn from the eighth poem of the *Catalepton*, written when the rumour of the Mantuan confiscation was flying, but not yet confirmed, that the poet with his blind father, mother, and brothers, might be compelled to regard it in the future as their only home.

For the moment, however, we are not concerned with the biographical incident but a trait of character. Virgil, like the true Epicurean, loved the country life and more particularly gardens. In the Fourth Georgic he laments that no room is left him for treating of this topic, and he pauses only to describe with heartfelt sympathy the charming establishment of the poor old Cilician peasant whose homely board is laden with dainties beyond the power of money to purchase.[1] The shy man from the north country, who stammered and suffocated

[1] *Geo.* iv. 116 ff.

in the high society of the capital, had shared that table, had strolled with the old man through his garden paths, had tasted of his pears and his melons, had marvelled at his skill with the grafting knife, had smiled at his petulant criticism of the lagging spring, had admired his flowers, and praised his honey. In such society the poet was at his ease. We can imagine him drawing the old man out, encouraging his prattle, not with the curiosity of the tourist gleaning little adventures to rehearse to his friends, but with sincere and simple sympathy, with the consciousness of a common love.

One hardly needs to be reminded of Virgil's pleasure in naming over the plants that he knows and loves.[1] A mere list of them covers pages. His meticulous observation of colours is part of the man : the dainty blush of the hyacinth, the yellow crocus, the blood-red berries, the golden apples. He notes the forms and habits of plants, the tall lily that trembles on its stem in the unsteady hand of Silvanus, the velvety surface of the pansy, the alder that shoots up in the springtime, and the twice-blooming roses of Paestum. Not less conspicuous is the delight in odours ; even garlic and wild thyme find a place ; the strong-smelling centaury, the agreeable cedar, the fragrant myrtle, the aromatic cinnamon. Plants possess also a language for him : the lowly tamarisk stands for humility, the cypress is stately, the mistletoe supernatural, the dittany magical. He loves the great ash-trees on the mountain side, the useful elms, the hardy oak. The ominous raven perched upon the hollow ilex is an image one cannot readily forget.

Virgil's interest in Priapus is no late acquisition of Neapolitan days. Already in the *Culex*, a genuine product of the Cremona schools and a Transpadane boyhood, as we have endeavoured to show, we find the shepherd worshipping the rude deity of gardens, line 86 :

Illi falce deus colitur non arte politus.

The worship of Priapus in the Transpadane region is evidenced by inscriptions,[2] and the existence of a Priapean poem by

[1] A handy List of Plants in Greenough's Virgil. Also Sergeaunt, *Trees, Shrubs, and Plants of Virgil.*

[2] *CIL*, V. 2803, 3634, 5117.

Catullus of Verona bears out our assumption that the cult was there familiar.[1] The interest of our poet in the little garden and the god is evidenced by a pretty quatrain in the Seventh Eclogue, lines 33–6 :

> Sinum lactis et haec te liba, Priape, quotannis
> expectare sat est : custos es pauperis horti.
> Nunc te marmoreum pro tempore fecimus ; at tu
> si fetura gregem suppleverit, aureus esto.

We should refrain from quoting these lines were it not that they bear such a resemblance in thought and situation to the last poem of the *Catalepton* addressed to Venus and Cupid. Both are composed in the form of vows, or rather a vow following a vow, a slender example of that constant relationship existing between the poet's major and minor works.

To return to Priapus, he finds a place also in the *Georgics*.[2] To the apiary an indispensable adjunct is the irrigated garden. The bees must be lured by the bright-coloured flowers ; the countryman must expect to harden his hand with toil, to plant with his own hand the thyme and the sheltering pine, and introduce the friendly streams. The establishment must be worthy of the Hellespontine god armed with his willow cudgel.

The time of composition of the three Priapean poems that usually accompany the *Catalepton* can be fixed with approximate accuracy. When we compare them with other extant Priapeans their conspicuous merit is the absence of obscenity, which puts them in a class by themselves and reminds us they must fall in the period following the renunciation of the unchaste muse.

They share with the *Ciris* a conspicuous use of anaphora in general, but particularly striking is the parallelism between a certain four verses and the famous quatrain of *sic vos non vobis*, ascribed to him by Asconius : [3]

> sic vos non vobis nidificatis aves,
> sic vos non vobis vellera fertis oves,
> sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes,
> sic vos non vobis fertis aratra boves.

[1] Frag. 1. [2] *Geo.* iv. 109–15.
[3] Don. auct. 70.

Our second quatrain occurs in the Second Priapean :

> mihi corolla picta vere ponitur,
> mihi rubens arista sole fervido,
> mihi virente dulcis uva pampino,
> mihi coacta duro oliva frigore.

We have written *coacta*, ' wrinkled ', for the impossible *glauca* ; the latter violates the metre and is out of place since the fruit of the olive and not the leaf is in question. It appears to have crept in by analogy of *virente* and *rubens* above. *Coacta* is added at the end of the line in *R* and appears as *cocta* in *B*. So our reading is well supported.

Since the former quatrain probably belongs to September of the year 44 we should be inclined to place the Priapeans somewhat earlier in his first sojourn at Naples.

This kind of barefaced anaphora, it will be readily granted, is nothing but self-parody, and introduces an important chapter in the development of Virgil's diction. This we shall discuss more fully in connexion with the parody of the *Phaselus ille* of Catullus. For the moment it will suffice to point out that in these Priapeans we are dealing with the period of relaxation shortly following upon the retirement to Naples. He has not yet encountered the stern rebuke of Varius nor the merciless pencil of Varus. He is still engaged upon pleasant trifles. As a man he is sincere, as he always was, but he is not serious as a poet. He has not yet attacked the grave problem of poetic diction. He is merely flirting with the muse. He is revealing gifts that may be turned to good account, but his eyes are not directed towards Parnassus. Yet he has fallen among friends who will set his feet upon the road.

In these poems we discern an autobiographical element. The garden, we take it, is a real garden, and the father and son of the third poem are the poet's father and younger brother :

> Huius nam domini colunt me deumque salutant,
> pauperis tuguri pater filiusque adulescens,
> alter assidua colens diligentia, ut herbae
> asper aut rubus a meo sint remota sacello,
> alter parva manu ferens semper munera larga.

We know from Suetonius that there were two brothers, one of

whom he says was celebrated in the Daphnis Eclogue.[1] The latter part of this statement we feel no obligation to accept, but the biographer would not have made it unless he knew that the death of the brother occurred at this time. The boy had recently taken the toga and the Eclogue may be placed in 40, from which we infer that he might have been ten years old in 45. Thus the last line of the above extract would appropriately describe him.

As for the father, we learn from Suetonius that his eyesight had failed him in later years,[1] but this would not prevent him from passing his time among his flowers and vegetables. One of the best gardeners we ever knew was almost blind. What is more likely than the inference that the Virgils retired to Naples partly for his sake ? He was still living in 42, when the confiscations were threatening and the elder son expresses special concern for him, and why may we not imagine that a similar affectionate piety breathes from the lines before us ?

In this same Priapean a local reference may also be identified. The Virgils have a rich neighbour :

> Quare hinc, O pueri, malas abstinete rapinas :
> vicinus prope dives est neglegensque Priapus ;
> inde sumite, semita haec deinde vos feret ipsa.

This opulent neighbour will be Lucullus, whose villa occupied the adjacent site of the modern Castel dell' Ovo.

These Priapeans have much in common with the *Eclogues* and, in particular, the affectation of poverty. One must be on his guard against taking this too seriously. It belongs to both classes of poetry as a natural convention. The owner of this little garden, as we learn from the second of the three, is not too poor to possess a steward. Moreover, the fatling lamb is frequent in his fold :

> meisque pinguis agnus ex ovilibus
> gravem domum remittit aere dexteram.

In the Eclogue we read

> quamvis multa meis exiret victima saeptis
> . . . . . .
> non umquam gravis aere domum mihi dextra redibat.

[1] Don. 14.

The failure to recognize the affectation of poverty as a standing convention of pastoral poetry has tempted us to lay altogether too much emphasis upon the humility of the Virgil family. Perhaps the pretence of poverty was a convention in the social class to which they belonged. Here in America the retired farmer of the Middle West exhibits this very trait in his conversation, and yet he possesses sufficient means to spend his winters in California or Florida. Judged by urban standards of wealth he is relatively poor, and this consciousness may justify his attitude, and it is quite possible that the prosperous Italian provincial of Virgil's day who retired to Rome for the education of his children was tempted to just such a manner of speech by the proximity of neighbours who had amassed much vaster fortunes in trade, speculation, or proconsular provinces.

On the whole, we may pause to remark, we are inclined to believe that the modern American is by virtue of his environment in a better position to understand the social status of the Virgil family than any modern European. The agricultural areas of our Middle West stand in just such a relationship to their own towns and to the big cities of the East as the wide and fertile valley of the Po once stood to its own colonies and to Rome. Our western prairies were exploited by adventurous families from the older states or provinces of the East just as the Roman colonies were founded by hardy settlers from the older Sabine and Latin territories lying adjacent to Rome. Both the American and the Roman migrated to a frontier region where in the one instance the unruly Indian and in the other the restless Gaul furnished a perpetual menace of strife and bloodshed. In both surroundings, in proportion as primitive difficulties of exploitation were mitigated, the prosperous settlers began to reach out for the culture they had temporarily sacrificed and to remove to the cities and towns for the sake of their children. They were poor no longer, but the memory of poverty and the consciousness of their former disadvantages were fresh in their minds. All who know the Middle West are familiar with such families to-day and are well acquainted with the instinct that moves them to speak as if they were poor.

We believe it was so with the parents of Virgil. They had

begun with little, had fallen upon prosperous times, had added farm to farm,[1] just as they do here in America, and then had moved down to Rome. In their talented son the psychology of the class in which he was born is peculiarly strong, and when he renounced the public career to which he had looked forward he seems to have taken a step backwards. He accepts his destiny and vividly realizes that he is by disposition no less than by upbringing the Transpadane, the farmer's son. The stamp of the soil is upon him. Urbanity is not for him either in dress or manners. Suetonius bears explicit witness that he wore a rustic appearance, and no doubt speaks of his later days when he was already famous. It follows that when Virgil turned to Priapean poetry as a momentary pastime he found in it a conventional affectation of poverty and humility that was incidental to his station in life and temperamental in himself. From the lowly Priapean to the humble pastoral, where the same convention prevails, is an easy and natural transition. Virgil was essentially sincere, and when he turned to Priapus he planted his feet upon the ground. He strikes into a path that he was qualified by nature permanently to follow. This path leads him naturally to the pastoral, then by a gentle upward grade to the *Georgics*, and still upward to the epic. The Priapeans are genuinely Virgilian, and more significant of future performances than the author himself could realize.

It seems timely at this place to call attention to Virgil as the ideal Epicurean, not in the popular sense of that word, nor yet in the philosophical sense of the learned world. It has been the unfortunate destiny of this system, which was founded primarily as a way of living, to be compelled to give an account of itself as a way of thinking, a point of view from which it can no more be judged fairly than Christianity can be judged by its various theologies. It is of Epicureanism as a way of life that we speak, and of those who lived after this way our Virgil is as good an example as we know, especially after his renunciation of the ambitious life. Whether he adopted celibacy on the recommendation of Epicurus or not we cannot say, yet celibate he

[1] Don. 1 'egregieque substantiae silvis coemendis . . . auxisse reculam'.

was. He was also abstemious in respect of food and drink,[1] as the sect required, and he preferred the country to the town, rarely visiting Rome where he had not been and could not be happy.[2] He shunned publicity and avoided politics. He despised diviners and esteemed the virtue of patience as an antidote to the pranks of fortune.[3] Like another Epicurean, Pomponius Atticus, who declined to profit by civil discord, he was unwilling to take advantage of another's calamity and refused the offer of a confiscated estate, though tendered by Augustus.[4]

But not alone on the negative side was he a good Epicurean, still more on the positive side. It was through friendship that the Epicurean found himself, realized himself,[5] and it was by this path that Virgil discovered his own gifts and talents. By Probus we are informed that he spent several years in honourable retirement, following the sect of Epicurus and living in rare and intimate harmony with Varus, Tucca, and Varius. It may be, and doubtless is, true that at the same time he cultivated Democritean science as a basis of contentment, and it may be that part of this found place in the permanent furniture of his mind, but friendship was the chief thing. In that kindred brotherhood he spent happy days, but he likewise heard the truth about himself and encountered the first searching and honest criticism of his compositions. Hostile criticism, contempt, and insult he had known in the capital, but these things only poison and fret a nature such as his. By disposition he stood in need of kindliness and friendship. When he found them his talents began to unfold themselves like flowers after a lagging spring. For such a one the cold Stoic theory of universal brotherhood contained no comfort or solace. He needed the friend in the flesh to satisfy his natural affections, to elicit his inborn tenderness, to develop his powers.

In this happy colony of congenial friends, a genuine brotherhood in the ethical sense of the term, a fruitful year seems to have passed away, and the poet may have looked forward to spending his whole allotted length of days after the same

[1] Don. 8.
[2] Ibid. 11 and 14.
[3] *Aen.* iv. 65; v. 524, 710; Hor. *Od.* i. 24 fin.; Ascon. in Don. auct. 75.
[4] Don. 12; Nepos, *Att.* vi. 3.
[5] Cic. *De Fin.* i. 65.

fashion, when successive tidings of crime, revolution, and confiscation ended his tranquillity. With this disaster we are not concerned at the moment, except in so far as it led to fresh friendships. Epicurean friendship, it must be noted, was not of a narrowly exclusive type. It was communal and wide, and if one conceived it aright and practised it in harmony with its principles, invited and involved a multitude of friendships. This spirit of brotherhood brought out some of the best that was in Virgil. It lay at the foundation of the so-called Augustan Circle, which had its inception in that candid little coterie that gathered about the school of Siro. When Virgil, eager to preserve his family and himself from want, hurried to Mantua, he plunged into a group of men whom he was now qualified to win to his side. He lost his acres but he found Maecenas, Asinius Pollio, and Alfenus Varus. In this company we have the second chapter of the Augustan circle. The friendly Virgil brings the two groups together.

CHAPTER VII

THREE EPIGRAMS

At the end of the *Vita* that we refer to as Donatus auctus stand some three pages of the choicest biographical material that has come down to us. Its value is enhanced by the circumstance of its ascription to Asconius Pedianus, the same sane and judicial scholar who wrote a commentary on the speeches of Cicero. In our excerpt he tells of Virgil's kindly disposition, of his generous admiration of talent, of his extraordinary freedom from the vice of envy, and, if we make exception of the perverse Cornificius and the notorious Anser, who followed Antony, of the universal esteem and affection in which he was held ; he likewise speaks of the unusual emphasis placed by Virgil upon the virtue of patience and of the crushing rebuke he once administered to a clever and loquacious member of the Augustan circle, a shallow sophist who had misinterpreted the poet's forbearance and reticence for lack of spirit. In this whole characterization there is not a single particular of which we feel called upon to feel dubious. On the other hand there is hardly a line of it that fails to bring singular enlightenment, and we experience little hesitation in accepting even the anecdote that narrates how the poet surpassed both Maecenas and Agrippa in the soundness of his advice to Augustus on the subject of the prospective principate. As we shall often repeat, Virgil was a master mind though not a master man.

Firmly lodged in the centre of this precious excerpt from Asconius is the familiar story of the couplet which was anonymously fixed upon the doors of a public building during the season of certain games :

> Nocte pluit tota, redeunt spectacula mane :
> commune imperium cum Iove Caesar habet.

When the author's identity was not easily ascertained a certain

Bathyllus came forward, claimed the verses, and received a reward from Augustus, whereupon the following hemistich made its appearance in the same place four times repeated :

Sic vos non vobis . . .

Bathyllus was unable to complete them nor could others, but when the turn of Virgil came he promptly furnished the missing words :

Hos ego versiculos feci ; tulit alter honorem :
sic vos non vobis nidificatis aves,
sic vos non vobis vellera fertis oves,
sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes,
sic vos non vobis fertis aratra boves.

Thereupon the name of Bathyllus became a byword and Virgil rose in esteem.

Pursuing our usual plan of assuming the authenticity of poems that are ascribed to Virgil by tradition or by the manuscripts in order to submit them sympathetically to the biographical test, the first step is to find the place of this incident in the poet's career and the possible affinities of form and sentiment between these slender verses and other compositions. We certainly find ourselves in that chapter of his life when parody and anaphora came easily and carelessly to his pen. We cannot be far from the day when he wrote the Second Priapean containing the quatrain :

mihi corolla picta vere ponitur,
mihi rubens arista sole fervido,
mihi virente dulcis uva pampino,
mihi coacta duro oliva frigore.

We rather incline to the belief that this quartet of verses afforded the suggestion for the fourfold puzzle of *sic vos non vobis*. We are likewise concerned with the period when his social status as a privileged member of a dominant group and his eminence as a favourite of the muses were yet to be established and confirmed. We can hardly picture to ourselves the author of the *Eclogues* as one who glided through deserted streets in the early hours of the morning to fasten his composition upon a public door.

These two factors of limitation, the relative obscurity of the author of the couplet and the practice of anaphora to the degree of making it a fad, enable us to define the occasion broadly between the early period of his residence at Naples, before he began to apply himself strict canons of taste, and the period of the confiscations that led to the composition of the *Eclogues* and to fame. Moreover, since Augustus, as he is proleptically called in the account of the incident, is in Rome, we may further identify the occasion as occurring later than April of the year 44 when Octavianus arrived from Apollonia. Still again, we must recall that Octavianus was not long enough in Rome to celebrate games from the autumn of 43 until his return from Philippi in January of 41. Thus we have narrowed the possibilities to the interval between April of 44 and November of 43. It will consequently appear most probable that we have to do with the games that were celebrated in the summer or autumn of 44, when the status of Julius as a deity was yet in dispute and an issue between Octavianus, the senate, and Antony. This follows from the fact that the couplet raises the question of the divinity of Caesar, as we shall presently make more plain.

In order to identify the historical situation demanded by our context we must recall that Octavianus after the murder of his uncle returned to Rome to claim his inheritance, of which Antony had possession. During the first stage of the ensuing contention the young Caesar attempted almost single-handed to secure his rights from his arrogant opponent. In the second stage of the conflict both contenders had fortified themselves with a multitude of organized sympathizers drawn from the ranks of the common citizens and the veteran class ; the aim of Octavianus, for the moment, was to execute the will of his uncle and to insist upon every honour decreed to his name.[1] During the third stage both of them had assembled armed forces, and Octavianus, in quest of vengeance, is drawn into the struggle for practical supremacy. It is the second stage of the contention in which our couplet seems to belong. Octavianus, who had come up from Brundisium through Campania,

[1] Appian, iii. 28.

in the first instance discouraged the enthusiasm of the veterans who thronged to his side and begged of them to return to their homes. Nevertheless, he moved about Rome with a crowd like a body-guard and the veterans were present in great numbers. We have every reason to believe that Virgil joined himself to this movement. He had served under Julius and was undoubtedly loyal to his memory. He was an ardent admirer of the godlike Octavius since the days when he had offered him the *Culex*, and at the same time he was a hot anti-Antonian. Moreover, we have the epigrams against Tillius Cimber and Ventidius Bassus to hint at his presence in the capital. If by his support he could in the slightest degree assist the young man to secure his rights and the execution of his parent's will, it is hardly likely that he lingered in Campania.

Returning now to the couplet, let us have it well in mind:

> Nocte pluit tota, redeunt spectacula mane:
> commune imperium cum Iove Caesar habet.

We must note that the Caesar mentioned is not Octavianus but the deified Julius. The younger man was Apollo from the very first, though we know from Horace and from inscriptions that he was also thought of as Mercurius.[1] But whether Apollo or Mercury, his youth and beauty invite him to either interpretation, he was certainly not Jove. Julius, on the other hand, was called Jupiter Julius and became distinctly associated, if not identified, with the father of gods and men by the addition of a fifth day to the Ludi Romani, 19th September, enacted shortly after his murder.[2] Antony, we know from Cicero's Second Philippic, although appointed *flamen* to the new god, was negligent of his duty, and was not even inaugurated by the date of the games. Octavianus, on the other hand, was insistent upon the performance of every honour that had been decreed to his adoptive parent. It is therefore most probable that we have to do in this couplet with the occasion of the Ludi Romani in 44, when Octavianus and Antonius

[1] Suet. *Aug.* 70; Hor. *Od.* i. 2, 41 ff.; Rushforth, *Lat. Hist. Insc.* pp. 51-61; Miss Haight, 'An Inspired Message in the Augustan Poets'. *Amer. Jour. of Phil.* xxxix.

[2] Cic. *Phil.* ii, 110; Dio, 44. 6, 4.

were fighting one another as yet by propaganda only and popular demonstrations, not yet with legions. Virgil, as poet of the anti-Antonian and pro-Caesarian group, just as he had done in the previous period of Caesar's absence in the East, enters the campaign with his pen and reasserts his adherence and devotion to the same cause under the new leader. He likewise asserts his stand upon the question of the divinity of Julius then before the public:

> Commune imperium cum Iove Caesar habet.

In his attachments, as in his literary interests, he displayed a singular consistency, which amounted almost to prophetic foresight. He was first and always on the side of Octavianus. If he considered the risk he did not shrink from danger. He was a man and he was not afraid. We believe that the principate as a concept first took shape in his mind and we believe that the advice he gave to Augustus on this subject, before the adjustments of the year 27, had been worked out by him with a degree of insight and a balance of judgement surpassing the capacity of the more practical Maecenas and Agrippa. He was a master mind though not a master man. 'In general', he told Augustus, 'tyranny has been an unhappy experiment both for the government and the governed, for the inevitable circumstance that hatred on the one side and injustice on the other compelled them to live in immoderate fear and immoderate suspicion respectively. Yet if the citizens were confident that a given man was just, and at the same time they loved him exceedingly, it would be a good thing for the State that the power should be concentrated in his hands. Wherefore, if the justice which you now practise shall be perpetuated without fear or favour of men, it will redound to your good and to that of the world for you to be sole master. For you possess the goodwill of all men to such a degree that they worship you as a god and believe you to be such.'[1]

In writing of extraordinary men it cannot be too often reiterated that you must not trust to general inferences. Virgil was an extraordinary man attended by an extraordinary

[1] Don. auct. 78.

fortune. In his private affairs he may have misjudged his career and in his friendships he may have consented to attachments that led to embarrassment, but in his political affinities he was always single-hearted and invariably right and, whether by good judgement or by happy instinct, he anticipated the future. To employ the language of his time, we may say that he discerned the god in the lad Octavius at the first meeting; he followed Julius and was among the first to assail Antony; he was disgusted at the reconciliation of Antony and Julius that weakened the position of the dictator just when it needed strengthening; yet he came forward to assert the divinity of the martyred leader; he was cast down again when Octavianus joined with Antony but he threw himself upon the friendship of Pollio when Pollio's sympathies were dubious; when the treaty of Brundisium gave hope of peace he was ready with his Messianic Eclogue to throw a glamour of glory over the new age precisely when it was needed. By means of the *Georgics* he aided in crystallizing Italic and Western sentiment against the Orient. When the principate was inaugurated he was ready with a great work that should plant it for all ages in the imaginations of men. From first to last he was a campaigner and he never was compelled to change sides, because he chose the right side in his youth. The *Culex* addressed to the lad Octavius, the iambics directed against Antony, the couplet asserting the divinity of Julius, the Octavian propaganda carried on by the *Eclogues*, the Italic propaganda contained in the *Georgics*, and the glorification of the principate in the *Aeneid*, constitute a biographical unit pervaded by an unwavering loyalty and a courageous patriotism, at the same time instinct with prophetic insight. Let us learn to stand back far enough from the details to envisage the whole.

After the protagonists left Rome for the northern parts of Italy late in the year 44 Rome still continued in a turmoil and the campaign of literary propaganda broke out with renewed violence when Cicero released the Second Philippic. To this period of the great orator's attacks upon Antony and his henchmen belong the following iambics of Virgil, who appears

to have remained in Rome, or at least to have kept in close touch with events there going on:

> Corinthiorum amator iste verborum,
> iste iste rhetor, namque quatenus totus
> Thucydides, Britannus! Attice febris!
> tau Gallicum, min et sphin, ut male illisit,
> ita omnia ista verba miscuit fratri.

Fortunately the epigram became famous and we possess the authority of Quintilian [1] and Ausonius [2] to prove its genuineness while we have Quintilian and Cicero to identify the man attacked as one Tillius Cimber who murdered his own brother.[3] He appears to have pretended to be a new Thucydides and at the same time a Gallic prince, but the one claim was no less absurd than the other. He was a half-breed Gaul and murdered the Greek language as he murdered his own brother. His dreams of Atticism must have appeared particularly absurd when joined with a Gallic brogue and Massiliot archaisms.

The interest of the piece is considerable on account of the indirect evidence it affords of the authenticity of the whole body of the *Catalepton*, and this interest is not diminished when we regard the lines as a testimonial of Virgil's consistent opposition of Antony and the Antonians. Moreover, it incidentally reveals the attitude of the poet towards Atticism. The word *febris*, it must be noted, does not signify, as in English, excessive enthusiasm, but rather delirium, illusion, self-deception. It does not follow, therefore, that Virgil is ridiculing Atticism. Quite the contrary. He champions it. It may even be that he was an extremist in the quest of simplicity and directness. His natural interest in lowly things, in flowers, in gardens, in peasants and humble folk would have been utterly inconsistent with a pretentious style or copiousness of diction, and it is not likely that his tastes as a man were greatly different from his inclinations as a stylist. It was the mastery of the *molle atque facetum* that his friends allowed him a few years later, and if we throw back this judgement to its logical

[1] viii. 3, 28. [2] *Grammaticomastix*, 5–9.

[3] *Phil.* xi. 14. The poetical models are Catullus, 14 and 44, where we find the conceit of a 'poisonous' poem or speech.

antecedent we should expect to find him an Atticist before his retirement from the sphere of oratory. A special phase of Atticism, the habit of culling over the old writers for phrases of pregnant simplicity, cultivated beyond due limits by Sallust, is attested for Virgil by Asconius [1] and abundantly demonstrated by the commentators.

It must be borne in mind that Virgil was under the tutorship of Quintilius Varus, a man slightly older than himself who had belonged to the circle of Catullus and probably communicated to his friend the doctrines of Calvus and his school. Nettleship sagely remarked that the Augustan literature had its roots in republican literature.[2] We might go a step farther and say that the Augustan poetry descended from the Catullan circle. Yet one must never forget that no movement and no school can quite account for Virgil's style and diction. The influence of the Atticists upon Virgil was negative and corrective. The positive influence, if any there was, seems to have come from Maecenas who espied in the writing of his alumnus a tendency of diction akin to the colloquial,[3] exemplified by mere ' sports ' in the first place, perhaps, which, once recognized and tended, produced a novel and elegant bloom. To demonstrate this would call for a separate chapter.

The tenth poem of the *Catalepton* is an amazingly clever parody of the epigram of Catullus in which he dedicates his skiff to Castor and Pollux. The pretty lines and sentiments of the original, which must have been no less familiar to Virgil than a nursery rhyme, are metamorphosed with delightful art into a ridiculous lampoon upon a certain Quintio who began his life as an ostler, won distinction for himself in the transport service of Caesar, and finally became praetor in 43. His real name was Publius Ventidius Bassus and he lived to win a triumph and to see his imprint upon coins. Some see bitterness, perhaps, in the lines of Virgil, but we regard it chiefly as fun. Vindictiveness is one of the last vices of which

[1] Don. auct. 71.
[2] *Ancient Lives of Vergil*, p. 25.
[3] Agrippa denounced it as a ' cacozelia ' : Don. 44.

we can accuse him, but real humour we know was his. Who can think of the man dedicating to the gods his last curry-comb and whipstock without genuine laughter ? It may mightily have amused the blind old father of the poet, who must have known every inch of Cremona, including its transport agencies and Ventidius. It may have pleased the Octavian circle, but the lampoon is directed against the party and the times rather than the man. Even in the more bitter days of the confiscations our poet lays the blame not upon men but upon civil discord.

At the present moment, however, we are less concerned with politics and the absurdities of the men whom Julius Caesar bequeathed to Marcus Antonius than with the parody as a key to Virgil's mind and style. He possessed a natural gift for paraphrase and he learned to turn it to good poetic use. Parody in itself is not a high order of poetry, but the gift of writing it, when joined to a proper mind, may acquire the greatest artistic value. There is nothing that gives depth to diction, nothing that so increases the suggestiveness of language, nothing that enhances the power of words above their normal vigour more than a perceptible allusion to beautiful phrases of which they have previously formed a part. Draw the inert needle across the magnet and it trembles at every approach of steel. Imbue the commonest word in a phrase of memorable sentiment and rhythm, and a similar collocation elsewhere will awaken the most delightful searchings of the memory. The most delicate charm of verse is due to induced currents of feeling, tremulous thrills of association, unheard melodies, scarce audible rustling of laurel leaves.

It is the frequent reminiscence of Catullus, who furnished the original of the phaselus parody, that affords the most conspicuous secondary beauties of Virgil's verse. Take for instance the exquisite line with which the elegy begins that records the melancholy visit to the distant grave of his brother in Bithynia, No. 101 :

Multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus.

Virgil rings the changes upon it again and again : it is part

of the lines with which Anchises greets Aeneas in Elysian fields, *Aen.* vi. 692–3 :

> Quas ego te terras et quanta per aequora vectum
> accipio, quantis iactatum, nate, periclis !

How appropriate, how charming is this secondary sentiment, this melodious accompaniment of the principal theme ! Yet it is parody, the gift of parody turned to artistic account. Virgil could hardly think of travel in the East without the suggestion of this line. We meet it again in *Geo.* i. 204–7 :

> Praeterea tam sunt arcturi sidera nobis
> haedorumque dies servandi et lucidus anguis,
> quam quibus in patriam ventosa per aequora vectis
> Pontus et ostriferi fauces temptantur Abydi.

In the Seventh Aeneid the swarm of bees settles upon the laurel of Latinus, line 65 :

> stridore ingenti liquidum trans aethera vectae,

in which the image of the original line is less manifest. It appears more dimly in the words of Latinus to the Trojans, vii. 197–8 :

> Quid petitis ? quae causa rates aut cuius egentis
> litus ad Ausonium tot per vada caerula vexit ?

The language of the Fourth Aeneid, the story of Dido, abounds to such a degree in verbal and metrical reminiscences of the Ariadne episode in the poem of Catullus on the marriage of Peleus and Thetis that one can hardly fail to see in the lesser work the model of the greater ; Virgil knew Catullus by heart. Compare the following :

Cat. 181. respersum iuvenem fraterna caede secuta.
Aen. 21. sparsos fraterna caede penates.
Cat. 62. magnis curarum fluctuat undis.
Aen. 532. magnoque irarum fluctuat aestu.
Cat. 141. sed conubia laeta, sed optatos hymenaeos.
Aen. 316. per conubia nostra, per inceptos hymenaeos.[1]

[1] For other examples see DeWitt, *The Dido Episode in the Aeneid of Virgil*, pp. 72 ff.

That this is a kind of parody no one can deny. The words are as much in place in Virgil's verse as if they had never been similarly used before. Yet taken collectively in this book they form a constant accompaniment of the principal theme. It seems as if the poet is telling two stories. The slighter ghost of Ariadne is for ever in the background. There is a second depth in the language and a second depth in the thought. Virgil writes upon palimpsests.

CHAPTER VIII

AETNA

For various reasons we assign the composition of the *Aetna* to the months following November, 43, when Octavianus dashed the hopes of Virgil by uniting with Antony, but first a few words must be said about the problem of authenticity.

So many theories have been advanced without achieving any consensus of opinion among scholars that we prefer to rest our case exclusively upon authority and more particularly upon Suetonius, who says 'Scripsit etiam Aetnam'.[1] When Suetonius pronounces upon a matter of taste and judgement we feel no call to follow him, but when he pronounces upon a question of fact we recognize no better foundation of belief. In the case before us our biographer was well aware of the existence of a controversy, and it is quite reasonable to assume that he both sought and found in the available data sufficient grounds for an affirmative verdict. The addition of the words 'de qua ambigitur' only enhances the value of his judgement, and reminds us that he feels convinced of authenticity in spite of the controversy. If he had casually mentioned the *Aetna* in a catalogue along with the *Culex*, *Catalepton*, *Ciris*, and other works, we could not have been sure that he was on his guard, but when he lists it separately in this explicit and emphatic way there can be little doubt that he is registering a conviction based upon evidence.

The authority of Suetonius is confirmed by the well-known letter of Seneca to Licinius urging him to undertake a poem upon this theme,[2] wherein he says that Virgil's contribution to the subject had not prevented Ovid from touching it, nor did it deter Cornelius Severus. That this statement refers to some other poem than the one before us can only be main-

[1] Don. 19 'Scripsit etiam de qua ambigitur Aetnam'.

[2] *Ep.* 79.

tained by rushing to the improbable conclusion that the work of one of the writers mentioned, or of still another whose name has not come down to us, by some means found its way into the Virgil manuscripts and completely displaced the original copy of the poet. Rather than attempt to leap this chasm we should suggest that we make an effort to fit the poem before us into a connected account of the poet's life in the hope of understanding him better by means of it. If this line of procedure proves unprofitable, then we can fall back upon the desperate hypothesis that we are dealing with a changeling.

If the assertion is flung at us that the author of the *Aeneid* could not have composed a work so frigid, we should reply that Virgil himself was ashamed of it and preferred to suppress it. It begins with no dedication and was never published. The muse was not with him when he wrote it, and none knew it better than himself. In the postscript to the Fourth Georgic and in the prologue to the *Aeneid*, amputated by his executors but preserved by Servius, and once again in the epitaph he composed upon his death-bed, he made it plain that he planned to rest his claim to glory solely upon his three great works. Moreover, he made explicit provision in his will that nothing should be given to the world which he had not himself published,[1] which implied the destruction of the *Aeneid* itself. Thus we may feel quite certain that a minor corpus existed in his scrinia of sufficient volume to cause him great concern for his reputation. Having this positive information, why should modern scholars feel reluctant to ascribe to him this mediocre composition? Surely we, who know what a bulk of dull stuff our own best poets have written, need feel no immoderate anxiety for the standing of an ancient who was himself so acutely aware of his own limitations and of the absurdities of the days of his apprenticeship. He appears to have cherished it himself as a milestone of his career, and his executors gave it to the world as a specimen of his immature art. Why should we not use it as biographical data?

For two reasons we must place the *Aetna* later than the *Ciris*. In the first place, the composition of a scientific work

[1] Don. 40 'ne quid ederent quod non a se editum esset'.

was still in prospect when he penned the introduction to the *Ciris*.[1] In the second place, we find the *Aetna* to be singularly free from the Greek words that abound in the former, and so we may assume that Virgil had taken to heart the precepts of Varius, preserved in the quatrain discussed above. The truth is that he keeps so close a watch over himself in this regard as not to venture even upon so pardonable a Greek word as *caminus*, which he employed three times in the *Aeneid*. Now when we reflect that the material he was treating made very special demands upon the Latin language in a field where it was admitted to be deficient, we readily conclude that Varius the executor may have taken special pleasure in the preservation of the poem as a monument of his own influence. No one who compares the diction of the *Ciris* and the *Aetna* in the light of Catalepton vii can miss the inferences. Virgil was in tutelage and preserved the records of it. Varius was interested and spared them. It is a chapter in the development of the new academy.

The happy fraternal life of the Epicurean colony was not continuous. The Virgils had been settled there a single year when Octavianus, on his way from Apollonia to claim his inheritance, passed through Campania and made a preparatory canvass of the veterans. For the time being their military aid was declined, but many seem to have followed him to lend their suffrage and their moral support, Virgil, apparently, among the number. The interval of the sojourn in the capital, extending from the spring of 44 until the autumn of 43, broken, perhaps, by the usual visit to the Mantuan homestead, divides the early Neapolitan period into two parts. To the former belonged the *Ciris*, to the latter the *Aetna*. In the former he was reacting pleasurably to a novel environment and a second hope of happiness; in the second he is utterly miserable and reacting to a fresh disappointment. The growing strength of Octavianus in the latter half of 43 and the defeat of Antony before Mutina must have raised his expectations to a pinnacle. The sudden reconciliation of his youthful hero with his special abomination, and the rumour of proscriptions that followed

[1] Lines 36–41.

promptly upon the news of it, must have dashed him to the depths of despair. To remain in Rome was an inconceivable plan. He retires once more.

It is to this darkest period in his own fortunes and those of the State, when no one knew the real mind of Octavianus and the attachment of his sympathizers was strained to the uttermost, that we should ascribe the *Aetna*. These are the Lucretian days of his studies. If in the previous time the fugitive from the jostling crowds and the envious malice of the Forum had felt the necessity of seeking a more peaceful and congenial environment, he now experiences the additional need of an antidote to pain and a bulwark against the shock of cosmic disturbances that prevail without. He would retire into his own soul. The mere mention of external things is too painful to be suffered. It is this that makes of the *Aetna* such a detached work. Not a single incident finds record in it that can be made the basis of sure chronological definition. The seclusion of the author is resolute, deliberate, and complete. The taste of all the pleasures of life has turned sour in his mouth save one, the passion to know. This conviction, we may pause to note, although for the moment it attains the violence of an obsession, is really a permanent trait of the poet, and we are inclined to accept the statement ascribed to him by Asconius, that either the monotony or the variety of all things eventually brings disgust to man with the sole exception of knowledge.[1] This is the real Virgil, poet by destiny but philosopher by choice. After many days, in the last lap of his career, he planned when he had finished the *Aeneid* to devote himself to his real passion, philosophy.[2] He may be compared to Leonardo da Vinci, who to the world was a painter, but to Leonardo a mathematician. To Virgil the service of the muses is a duty. He placed himself again and again at the disposal of the leaders of his choice. While he worked upon the *Aetna* he was feeling that his services had been dispensed with. Yet it was only an interim. He would soon be in harness again.

The *Aetna* is well named. There is something really volcanic about it. It seems to have been written almost at the temperature

[1] Don. auct. 73. [2] Don. 35.

of passion. The reader is not mesmerized like the wedding guest in the *Ancient Mariner*, is not the victim of an uncanny spell. He is seized by violence, forced into a corner, and compelled to listen. There is no one present but the author and the single listener. He cannot turn away, he cannot escape. He is not hearing the words of an evangelist like Lucretius, but rather the tirade of a fanatic, who fairly boils over with contempt of bards, of myths of giants, heroes, and the age of gold. Scorn is poured upon all mankind; the human race is all plebeian, their common fund of ideas only lies and falsehood; they are a herd of beasts that never lift their heads; they grope for wealth beneath the ground or wear themselves out to wrest the means of livelihood from the fields. There is only one life worth while, and this is the pursuit of knowledge. It is the duty of man to fill his mind with ennobling science, to learn the mysteries of the earth and the secrets of the heavens. He must consecrate himself, dedicate his being.

Yet towards the close of this mad scientific tirade comes a very human, very significant, and very inconsistent incident of piety. On the occasion of a famous eruption of Aetna, when human beings were fleeing wildly for safety burdened down with gold and treasures that for the moment seemed as dear as life; when the poet—note the pathetic humour of our author—loaded himself down with his own poetry; when disaster was overtaking all, the devouring flames parted right and left to make way for the pious brothers Amphinomus[1] and Anapias, carrying to security their helpless and aged parents.

> O maxima rerum
> et merito pietas homini tutissima virtus!

No one who has acquired even to a slight extent that habit of quiet and sympathetic reflection which is the best instrument of Virgilian interpretation, can here fail to perceive that we are lighting upon the first draught of the Second Aeneid and a leading motive of the whole. The greatest thing in the world is piety! Amphinomus is Aeneas rescuing his aged parent from the flames of Troy. This dark night in which

[1] *Aetna*, 626 'Amphion fraterque'.

Virgil is groping after the crushing frustration of his hopes and the staggering blow sustained in the tragedies of the capital is yet illuminated by a ray of hope. All is not darkness. The faith in piety and virtue survives the conflagration and the gloom, even as the piety of Aeneas survives the collapse of Priam's kingdom and the close of a once glorious chapter in the history of mankind. Virgil is essentially sincere, and his works, though not superficially, are yet profoundly autobiographical. His mind and his emotional nature develop slowly and surely along the lines of a discernible experience of life. Of this experience the *Aetna* records an excruciatingly painful but not the last stage. The calamity of Mantua was soon to follow, his final matriculation in the school of sorrow.

That Virgil frequented Sicily we know from Suetonius, and we find in the Third Aeneid a brief description of the southern shore of the island as viewed from the sea, an example of the familiar type of literature that the ancients called a *periplus*. It begins at a point near Mount Aetna and ends at Drepanum, close to Mount Eryx and Segesta, which would imply that these were the parts of Sicily with which the poet was most familiar. Had he come down from Naples to Rhegium by land and then taken boat this would be a natural itinerary. It would seem that he had witnessed with his own eyes the eruptions of Aetna that preceded the murder of Julius. In the narrative of the prodigies that accompanied this event we note but this one alone that came under his own eyes, *Geo.* i. 471–3:

> Quoties Cyclopum effervere in agros
> *vidimus* undantem ruptis fornacibus Aetnam,
> flammarumque globos liquefactaque volvere saxa!

Servius quotes Livy to prove that the volcano was active in the period preceding the assassination. In the *Aetna* we constantly meet with the appeal to the evidence of the eyes.[1] It therefore appears probable that we deal with a personal experience.

In the emotional experience of the poet the *Aetna* stands close to Catalepton v, the scornful farewell to Rome. Just as

[1] 119, 136, 160, 179, 332, 449.

the union of Antony with Julius precipitated his first retirement, so the union of Antony with Octavianus compelled his second. The *Aetna* is an enlarged edition of the epigram. Hence the scorn of the commonplaces of poetry and mythology, which is even extended to the enjoyment of art and travel. Hence the negative attitude towards the world, the sense of aloofness, and the tone of scorn and defiance that pervades the whole poem. It is the sequel of the epigram just as the *Georgics* are the sequel of the *Eclogues*. The former pair represent the poet in defeat, the latter in victory.

With the *Copa* and the *Moretum* the *Aetna* has this in common, that it lacks a dedication, and for this reason there has been more doubt about the authenticity of all three. Dedications imply patrons and patrons furnish evidence of an author's identity. The lack in this instance is an indication that Virgil has banished himself and is turning to writing as a narcotic. In the case of the *Copa* and the *Moretum* we take it to mean that he is merely seeking diversion in literary experiments. The *Aetna*, again, resembles the *Ciris* in the isolation of the subject. Neither one is manifold in literary content like the *Culex*, which forecasts the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*. The *Ciris* is an isolation of the erotic interest, the *Aetna* of the scientific interest, both of which are subordinate motives of the major works. Yet the *Aetna* has a special significance in this, that Virgil believed his true calling to be scientific investigation and planned, when he had put the last hand to the *Aeneid*, to give himself to science for the remainder of his life, for we interpret the philosophy mentioned in the tradition to have been natural philosophy. To sentiments like the following he would have subscribed to his last hours :

> Sed prior haec homini cura est, cognoscere terram
> quaeque in ea miranda tulit natura notare :
> haec nobis magis affinis caelestibus astris.[1]

Poetry was always to him a labour, a duty to mankind, a pious obligation to the Empire, an interruption of a god-given vocation.

It has been a stubborn obstacle to the proper understanding

[1] *Aetna*, 252–4.

of Virgil that men unconsciously proceed to estimate him by Theophrastean formulas of ethics. No human character of any surpassing magnitude can be so measured. The individual man is no finite quantity, but rather a function composed of mingled variants and constants whereof the total value depends upon the equation. When Virgil was preparing himself for a public career and practice at the bar he devoted himself to rhetoric, to religious and civil antiquities. When he gave up the Forum he flaunted the Selii, Tarquitius, and Varro. Few have been so wise as to see with the sage Nettleship that no inconsistency arises in recognizing in this Varro the same to whom the author of the *Aeneid* stood in so great a debt. The young student of law had given himself to the study of antiquity, but the young acolyte of Epicurus and devotee of natural science foresaw no further need of it. Yet the enthusiastic convert to Epicureanism was soon to withdraw that renunciation. The fates were soon to lay firm hands upon him and demand the performance of task upon task wherein he would require the very stores of erudition upon which he had lately placed so low an estimate. He must become a rhetorician again, as he is in the later books of the *Aeneid*, and he must return to his antiquarianism. What had seemed for the moment sheer pedantry, learning unrelated to life, at once becomes living knowledge when labours never anticipated are thrust upon him.

In the light of these movements, the bound and rebound of a vital personality reacting to the pull and repulsion of external circumstances, we must interpret the minor poems and the *Aetna* in particular. We have busied ourselves overmuch with the study of little things, words, caesurae, and diction. These studies are needful, but the great essential thing is to think ourselves into the ebb and flow of the times and the personality of the poet in relation to them. He gave up the life of the Forum with the alacrity of a body suddenly released from a restraining force. He turned to the retreat of Epicurus as a needle comes home to the magnet. He rallies to the side of Octavianus after the death of Julius with the enthusiasm of a reborn hope. Tortured and enraged by the union of his friend with his enemy, he returns to his science as the defeated

prophet retires to the wilderness. Compared with this situation, of what consequence is a controversy over the question whether he, the poet, could properly speak of a traveller crossing the sea to view the Medea of Timomachus after Caesar had brought the picture to Rome?

The poet was always the prey of conflicting passions. By natural endowment he was a favourite of the muses, a lover of his country, and a devotee of science. It so turned out that he could not satisfy his every passion. Repelled by the Forum, he flees to science; recalled by his country he returns to civil life; disappointed by his leader and dismayed by the eddies of political currents, he retires again. Drawn once more into the maelstrom by the imminence of a personal calamity, he plays the part of a man and a poet, is drawn into labours that ended only with death. True to the call of duty, he postpones what he believed to be his true mission as a scientist until death itself robbed him of his guerdon. He is a frustrated genius. As with all highly conscientious men the stern realities of life obscure the theories. If the good of the world demand that the new leader and the new ideal of government be set on high in the imaginations of men, then science can wait and personal satisfaction be postponed. If men as we find them are delighted with myths of giants and heroes, then by all means let us tell of the impious Enceladus writhing beneath Aetna, even if science regards it as an idle tale. If the glamour of an immemorial past can consecrate a body of new and useful institutions, then let us fling its roseate colours over the fancies of mankind, even if the scientific truth of things is different. Men must be ruled as they can be ruled. *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, *Aeneid*, all are propaganda. Truth must wait.

The author of the *Aetna* is the evangelist of science. The author of the *Aeneid* is the evangelist of Augustan imperialism. As a scientist he overleaps his age and preludes the fervour of a distant, modern day. As a patriot and a poet he devotes himself to the service of his time, a sacrifice of love to conscience. His vision was retrospective and his vision was prospective. He knew the things that had been and the things that would be, but he lived in the living present.

It remains to clear away an objection to our dating of the *Aetna*. It is commonly claimed that it must antedate 46, and certainly 44, since a painting, identified as the Medea of Timomachus,[1] is mentioned in a context that seems to indicate it was situated in foreign parts, and Pliny, *N. H.* xxxv. 136, declares it to have been purchased and placed by Caesar in the temple of Venus Genetrix. Timomachus, however, having made a good sale of the first, appears to have begun upon another, and died, as the same Pliny tells us, while it was under his hands.[2] This unfinished painting, he informs us, became still more famous, and Virgil's reference is, no doubt, to this. Thus the bearing of the evidence is reversed, and the likelihood of our dating, in the first months of the triumvirate, is greatly enhanced.

We have chosen as a limit to this period of the poet's life the occasion of the composition of the little poem addressed to Siro's villa.

> Villula quae Sironis eras et pauper agelle,
> verum illi domino tu quoque divitiae,
> me tibi et hos una mecum quos semper amavi,
> si quid de patria tristius audiero,
> commendo imprimisque patrem; tu nunc eris illi
> Mantua quod fuerat quodque Cremona prius.

It is possible that the death of Siro, implied in the first line, fell in the same days with the evil news that Mantuan lands might be required for the satisfaction of the veterans. It is quite clear from the last line that Cremona and Mantua had long since ceased to be the residence of his father and consequently of the family. He does not say that henceforth this little villa will be what Mantua and Cremona *have been*, but what they *had been*. When we recall that his father was blind in his later years the assumption becomes more probable that the whole family, consisting of father, mother, and possibly two brothers, had been living at Naples in retirement since the withdrawal of the eldest son from the career in the Forum. We thus arrive at the conclusion that the Virgils may have occupied at Naples three different properties: first, a villa

[1] 596; Vessereau, *Aetna*, Intr. xvi ff. [2] xxxv. 145.

convenient to the school and garden of Siro; second, the villa and garden of Siro; and third, a more retired and tranquil situation at Sorrento. Down to the confiscation we shall be compelled to assume the necessity of regular visits to Mantua for the purpose of settling accounts with the bailiff. This had been done, no doubt, by the father in the earlier years, possibly by father and son, but when the father became blind, his son must have become the head of the household, as we manifestly find it in this poem.

Octavianus returned from Philippi in January of 41 and found the country and the capital in a turmoil over the confiscations already begun. The suspense of those concerned must have begun not later than the autumn of 42, and here we place the composition of this little poem.

CHAPTER IX

CONFISCATIONS: DIRAE, AND LYDIA

THE period included in these chapters falls between the years 42 and 37. It begins with the term of Pollio's command in Cisalpine Gaul as legatus of Antony, to which he was appointed at Bononia in November, 43, and probably entered upon soon afterwards. It includes the period of confiscations leading up to the Perusine War in 41–40 and the consulship of Pollio in the latter part of 40, preceded by the peace of Brundisium, and it ends with the third arrangement made between Octavianus and Antony in 37. For a later limit we may select the Fifth Satire of Horace, wherein we see Virgil and Varius coming up from their Campanian retreat to join the pilgrimage to Brundisium.

Like the previous period it may be divided into two parts: first, the interval of anxiety extending down to the year 40, when the question of lands and compensation was definitely settled, and second, the triennium terminating in 37. To the former period we assign the *Dirae* and the *Lydia*, a record of personal grief. Here belong also the best of the *Eclogues*, which really constitute a part of the Octavian propaganda and culminate in the Messianic Eclogue, a veiled paean of jubilee over the elimination of the Antonians from Italy and the West. The later Eclogues were composed to pay off the residue of debts of gratitude. Old cliques are now dissolved and the elements of the Augustan circle have come together. By the year 40 the new régime was morally and legally recognized and Virgil's probation at an end.

The *Eclogues* and the problems of order and date therewith connected we plan to discuss only so far as they possess a biographical interest and have a bearing upon the vicissitudes of Virgil's career and his progress in poetry. Much of the external evidence that has come down to us in this field is of slight value for the reason that it largely consists of inferences drawn

from the poems themselves after the interval of three or four centuries, which we are quite as well qualified to judge as the ancient scholiasts to deduce. Consequently we shall confine ourselves so far as possible to the internal evidence and to the historians. The main problem is to discover through what steps the would-be contented brother of the Epicurean colony of Naples, who, except for occasional diversion, had renounced the society of the muses and the life of the capital, succeeded after a brief period in rendering the labour of his pen essential to the exacting needs of a nascent imperial court, and found himself committed to a service of superb poetical propaganda from which he should never live to win a well- and hard-earned emeritus.

It will be generally granted, perhaps, that all the poet's life and activity down to the time of the confiscation was unconscious schooling and training for his true life's work, and it will be allowed that the calamity of the confiscation was the event that drew the disappointed man out of the sphere of life into which he had retreated into the new sphere of life where his talents peculiarly qualified him for the performance of indispensable service, but from this time onwards, we must note, our task becomes more and more difficult. We have no more frank autobiographical prefaces such as we find at the head of the *Culex* and the *Ciris*. The poet becomes more and more reticent as may be inferred from the fact that although during this period he must have lost his father, and probably his two brothers and his mother, yet he gives no hint of his grief unless we find it in the Daphnis Eclogue or in the brief lament for Anchises at the end of the Third Aeneid. Yet this is not the chief difficulty. With the *Eclogues* and the inception of that self-understanding circle of candid friends begins the fugitive element in the poetry of Virgil which no ancient commentator understood and of which no modern has found the key. Upon it we hope to throw a ray of light.

The claim of the *Dirae* to authenticity rests upon the Suetonian catalogue and various manuscripts. The content of the poem is easily related to known facts of the poet's life.

In form it is a chain of curses, directed against the lands that shall fall into the hands of the veterans. A mythological situation adapted to express the outraged feelings of the sufferer is found in the attempts of Thracian Lycurgus to ravage the vineyards and stamp out the worship of Bacchus. The poem is addressed to this god under the name of Battarus, Greek *Βάσσαρος*,[1] for the more familiar Bassareus, and the crimes of the king are all but allowed to stand for the conduct of the triumvirs, but this comparison is not for a moment pressed. The river Mincius appears under the name of Lydia, a nymph, of course, and recalls by her name the Etruscan origin of Mantua, suggested possibly by Catullus, 31 :

Gaudete vosque, O Lydiae lacus undae.

One gathers from the poem that the Virgil estate included a fine forest along with cultivated fields, vineyards, and pastures, which supports our argument previously set forth that the father of the poet had become moderately wealthy. One estimate has placed his possessions at 4,000 jugera.

The poem was written as a relief and outlet for the poet's sorrow and was never intended for publication. To this we may attribute the obscure allusion to the Mincius under the name of Lydia and the still more cryptic reference to the legend of Proserpina, whom he calls Trinacria, plucking bright flowers by the spring of Cyane in Sicily. The line runs thus and is otherwise obscure :

Impia Trinacriae sterilescant gaudia vobis.

The joys of Proserpina, of course, were not unholy, but if the impious soldiers shall pluck the blooms of Virgil's fields it will be to him an unholy joy. So the line seems to say, ' May the meadows bear no flowers to afford you an impious joy.' This interpretation is made clear by the fact that the second curse, a *hysteron proteron* expansion of the first, expresses the prayer that the flowers may lose their fragrance and beauty and turn to poisonous plants. Obscure also are lines 93–4 :

Tuque resiste pater. En prima novissima nobis !
Intueor campos ; longum manet esse sine illis.

[1] *Orph. Hymn*, 45. 2.

'And thou too linger a moment, father of the kids. Behold, of my first love I take my last leave! I gaze upon my fields; a weary lot awaits me, far from their sight to spend my days.' The following lines help to make this clear:

> Rura valete iterum tuque, optime Lydia, salve,
> sive eris et si non mecum morieris, utrumque.

'My glebes, farewell, and thou, best Lydia, fare thee well, whether thou shalt be when I am gone, and shalt not die with me, alike farewell.'

References to the division of his lands are not lacking. The poem begins:

> Battare, cycneas repetamus carmine voces:
> divisas iterum sedes et rura canamus.

from which we learn that a poem has been lost. Lines 45 and 46 run thus:

> pertica qua nostros metata est impia agellos,
> qua nostri fines olim, cinis omnia fiat.

The adherence to the cause of Brutus and Cassius is noted as the reason for the confiscation in lines 82–5:

> O male devoti, praetorum crimina, agelli
> tuque inimica tui semper discordia civis:
> exsul ego indamnatus egens mea rura reliqui,
> miles ut accipiat funesta praemia belli.

In form the poem is a series of curses or an elaborate *devotio*, one part being separated from the next by invocations of Bacchus recurring like a refrain:

> Sic precor et nostris superent haec carmina votis.

He first curses the flowers, the fields, the pastures, the orchards, the vineyards, the forests, and the streams, a list that all should study who are accustomed to think of the poet as a poor shepherd or a humble peasant. He then repeats this curse in *hysteron proteron* fashion and in more elegant language. Then in a rising tone he invokes the flames to descend with wind and storm upon the forests, and invites them to extend to the ripening grain, to the vines and the fruit trees, wherever the cursed rod of the surveyor has intruded. He calls upon the sea

to flow in and flood it all with waves and sand, or failing the sea, for the rivers to overwhelm it with their streams. The ploughman shall turn fisherman and the stranger who has fattened on civil crime shall cast his hook where his fields once lay. The poet-proprietor will depart with a sad farewell to the land and to Lydia but never till white sees black and his right hand forgets her cunning will the love of these scenes perish from his heart.

Although the *Dirae* never lost its place in the Virgilian corpus it was not read in schools and consequently never concerned the ancient commentators, a situation that leaves us little to mourn and much to rejoice over. The obscurities are not so difficult to dispel. Once it is recognized that the Lydia is the nymph of the Etruscan Mincius and the crimes of Thracian Lycurgus against the vineyards and worship of Bacchus are the key to the imaginative parable, the whole thing becomes as clear as the sun in a bright Canadian sky. The conventional assumption of poverty that we meet in the *Eclogues* is here corrected by a frank admission of wealth. How absurd is the customary conception of the poet as a poor peasant weeping for a few acres! In a new country like Transpadane Gaul there were probably as many ten-acre farms as we see in our American West, whose citizens denote a hundred-acre farm in old Ontario as a calf pasture. Virgil was by disposition susceptible of great exaltation and deep dejection of spirit, but never would he have descended to such depths as these for a peasant's holding. It is not the shift from one poverty to another that dismays him. It is the spectacle of an opulent property parcelled out among rude soldiers, the sacrifice of a patrimony laboriously garnered, the crimes of the times, that outrage his feelings. His was no paltry stake.

The anguish of suspense was protracted. All through that long year of 41 when the miserable sufferers were clamouring about the ears of Octavianus, when the streets of Rome were thronged with despairing multitudes seeking opportunity to present their petitions;[1] all through the tedious days of the Perusine War when Antony was threatening from the East and

[1] A striking description in Appian, *B. C.* v. 12.

his lieutenants were lingering in the Transpadane country with legions and legions living off the country;[1] all through the dreary days when even confiscations were postponed and the star of Octavianus seemed hopelessly eclipsed, Virgil was compelled to wait. Is it likely that he was writing only Eclogues then? Is it not more likely that he was writing curses? Only when Antony's brother and Fulvia had left the country, when Antony's four lieutenants with their waiting legions had taken their departure or declared their neutrality, or yielded to death, do we believe that Varus, Gallus, and Pollio, or Octavianus himself, were in a position to give the poet a final verdict or indemnify him out of their own purses for his losses. Yet Virgil did not peddle his sorrows nor lose his self-control. In versification he found a secret relief but meanwhile he played a man's part as we shall see when we come to the *Eclogues*.

The *Lydia*[2] is not found in the lists but enjoys the same manuscript authority as the *Dirae* and is said to follow it without title, so that Suetonius might easily have overlooked it in compiling his catalogue from the corpus, and it is so closely related to the *Dirae* that he may have regarded it as a part. The title has been added in modern times. The poem itself is an elaboration of sentiments inherent in the *Dirae*. It is addressed to the nymph of the Etruscan Mincius under the name of Lydia, which may have acquired a typical value from its use by Valerius Cato under similar circumstances. Yet Virgil is here intending only to console his own misery and takes welcome refuge in a cryptic name. It is this sentiment of his own misery, his outraged feelings, his broken life, and the prospect of possible death, that finds utterance in the *Lydia*.

> Dulcia rura, valete, et Lydia dulcior illis
> et casti fontes et, felix nomen, agelli.

[1] Calenus, Plancus, Ventidius, and Pollio: Appian, v. 50; Velleius, 74. 4; Antony did besiege Brundisium: Appian, v. 56.

[2] Rand and Frank reject it: 'Young Virgil's Poetry', *Harvard Studies*, xxx, pp. 182–4; *Vergil, A Biography*, p. 131. Cf. Lindsay, *Class. Rev.* xxxii. 62 ff.

Unfortunately the text tradition is not so good as in the *Dirae* and in two passages has been so affected by the carnal imaginations of editors that some corrections are necessary before sketching the content. Before taking this step, however, we must remark that no palaeographer, however great his skill, is equipped for the establishment of this text unless he is profoundly steeped in Virgilian sentiments and correctly places the poem in the emotional experience of the poet. In lines 66–71 Vollmer offers us the following, in which the four italicized words are emendations:

> et *moechum* tenera gavisa est *laedere* in herba
> purpureos flores, quos insuper accumbebat,
> *Cypria* formosa supponens *bracchia* collo.

Now the manuscripts, if we change *mea* to *dea* in the first line, give clear meaning and no indecency whatever. It must be borne in mind that Virgil had renounced the obscene.

> et dea cum tenera gavisa est ludere in herba,
> purpureos flores, quos insuper accumbebat,
> grandia formoso supponens gaudia collo,
> tum, credo, fuerat Mavors distentus in armis,
> nam certe Volcanus opus faciebat et illi
> tristi turpabat malam ac fuligine barbam.

What a pretty picture is this, and what a delicate telling of a wanton tale! Note the humour too, the surprise in store for Mars and the picture of Vulcan with twinkling eyes, toiling like a village blacksmith. 'And in those days when the goddess delighted to sport on the tender sward, bending her head over the bright flowers that she held, her supreme delight, and raising them to her beauteous throat as she reclined, then, methinks, the god of war was not detained afar in battle, for verily Vulcan was busy at his toil and to compass the shame of the paramour was befouling his face and beard with sooty grime.' Before one passes judgement on these minor poems, it is particularly important that he should have a fairly reliable text. In addition to the above consider lines 79–80: Vollmer reads:

> tantam Fata meae *carnis* fecere rapinam,
> ut maneam, quod vix oculis cognoscere possis.

The prosaic word *carnis*, 'flesh', is a conjecture of Baehrens. *M* gives *cordis* but the others *vitae*. Taking the latter, as demanded by *meae*, we translate 'The fates have played such havoc with my life that with your eyes you scarcely see the semblance of my former self'. This is not very poetical but at least it does not offend.

The *Lydia* resembles the *Dirae* in the use of a line like a refrain in part the same, in part different, which reminds us of Virgil's habit of parodying himself, noted in the discussion of the *Priapeans*. These are the lines:

Invideo vobis, agri formosaque prata
. . . . . .
Invideo vobis, agri, discetis amare
. . . . . .
Invideo vobis, agri, mea gaudia habetis.[1]

Between these lines are pretty bucolic sentiments such as later found expression in the *Eclogues*, the *Georgics*, and even in the *Aeneid*. Thus far there is nothing unworthy of our Virgil and the whole conceit is pretty. The poet is forced to go far away, but the Mincius will still flow in its accustomed way and Lydia will haunt the woods, the meadows, and the vineyards. She will hum the verses of the poet, she will sing the songs that she has learned of him. The trees will rejoice, the meadows and the springs will be glad, the birds will hush, and the rivulets will linger in their course while his love proclaims her sweet laments. 'Ye fields, I envy you. My heart's delight abides with you. Yours the joy that once was mine, while wasting grief consumes my frame.'

The poem now begins to develop ode-wise into an extended comparison which finally terminates in veritable allegory, a *locus lubricus*, which has led to much misunderstanding, hostility, and disgust, and on the part of the text critics, carnal emendations. This grows naturally out of the allegorical Lydia who was introduced in the *Dirae* and furnished the sentiment which is here elaborated, but it calls for careful and delicate handling to reclaim it from the condemnations that

[1] With these compare 'Sic vos non vobis' and the refrain in *Ecl.* viii 'Incipe Maenalios mecum, mea tibia, versus'.

have been poured upon it through misapprehension, and it is doubtful if it can be entirely justified. Yet something can be said in vindication.

Lydia was no ordinary nymph. She was versed in poesy and she was beautiful. Well, this means that Virgil was a poet, and the Mincius a beauteous stream. 'Lydia was fair as Europa—Jupiter, turn thy ear the other way.' The comparison proceeds. 'Happy was that beast, happy the lord of the goats, happy all the males of animal kind! Why am I forced so often to endure cruel pain? Moon in heaven, you know what grief is. Have pity on my pain. Phoebus, thou shalt crown thyself with laurel and tell thy love for Daphne. Each god has his several pleasures. Ye gods in heaven, what sin has this age committed that our lot should have been harder?'

The poem proceeds in a similar strain. 'Was I the first to steal a furtive love? Would that I had been! Death would have been sweeter than life. In times of old it was Jupiter himself that knew the pleasure of a secret love before he was Juno's groom, and Juno too, and Venus and Mars were guilty. So in the golden age when heroes lived. Therefore, what god and hero did, why not this later age? Unhappy man that was not born when nature knew no law! Unhappy the day of my birth and wretched this generation when men may not do as they would! The fates have made such havoc of my life that with your eyes you scarcely see the semblance of my former self.'

In all this there is much prettiness along with that unfortunate allegory. The reference to Diana and Endymion and Phoebus and Daphne is all that poetry could demand, and the incident of Mars and Venus, once the text is expurgated of modern emendations, is daintily told. The words *sera libido* are unfortunate to the casual reader, but the poet did not mean 'lust'. The poet's affection for those fields and streams was a passion with him. He sought a strong metaphor to express it and fell into an offensive ambiguity. It does not follow that we must reject the poem. The pertinent thing to note is this, that he never used the word again in all his later

works. He had employed it before in the *Ciris*, line 13, of which we give the following text:

> Quod si, mirificum genus, O Messalla, futuris
> mirificum saeclis, modo tibi velle libido.

In the *Lydia* we are just at the end of the author's apprenticeship and in this incident of *libido* is recorded one of his latest lessons. No word, however strong and sound by etymology, can be tolerated in poetry if lewd associations cling to it. In the colloquial speech lies the custody of language.

Is this Virgil's? The manuscripts say so and a plausible reason is manifest for its absence from the list. It is closely related to the *Dirae* as an elaboration of words and sentiments therein contained. The *Dirae* has been thought to be genuine by competent critics. Therefore the *Lydia* has a claim. From much of the condemnation it is redeemed by the recognition of the allegory and still further by the correction of the text. It is full of pretty lines and sentiments well worthy of Virgil. If it be his, then he himself condemned it. Consequently we need not judge it by the standards of the major works. If it contains an unfortunate metaphor, this may have been apparent to him and may have constituted the grounds of his own dissatisfaction. We must remember the one unfortunate metaphor in Lincoln's great Gettysburg speech and we must bear in mind the mass of inferior stuff our best poets have written.

In point of time it follows the *Dirae* and it was written in the summer season, as the reference to green grapes proves. We place it tentatively in the middle of 41.

CHAPTER X

HISTORICAL SETTING OF ECLOGUES

The murder of Julius, of course, was the signal for the reassembling of the Antonian party which had blossomed out for a brief biennium between the arrival of the robust lieutenant from the Pharsalian campaign and the return of the conqueror from Egypt. The master of horse of those days was not the mere dolt and drunkard that Cicero would have us believe. He took advantage of his opportunity while fortune's horn was overflowing and bestowed his bounty with a liberal hand. Bankruptcy soon followed, however, and his master allowed him to remain bankrupt. Yet after the fateful Ides he was once more in a position to resume his interrupted career and, heeding the stern teaching of experience and the more insistent prodding of Fulvia, he set in to use the bounty of the State and the machinery of government for his own private ends. Brutus and Cassius were rather cleverly legislated out of Italy and his own Macedonian legions brought over to secure him in an Italian province. This was not the procedure of a dunce and a carouser. The whole republican clique was beaten in the Senate, outmanœuvred in the Forum, and forced to an aggressive attitude in the East that gave them the appearance of raising the standards of civil war against the fatherland. He had put his opponents in the wrong.

Little did Antonius dream, however, that the young Apollo who hastened back from Epirus to claim his inheritance was destined in the course of a few years to turn the same trick on himself that he was so neatly turning on the liberators. Yet it was this stripling who, from the moment of arrival in Rome, prevented Antony from having it all his own way. Octavianus may have behaved like an insulted heir for a few days but in a few months he had succeeded in matching his boisterous opponent both in the Forum and in the field, and he started

in to handle the Senate just as if he had long sat upon the benches himself and knew its every weakness. Within the space of eighteen months after his return the head of Decimus Brutus had fallen and Antony, beaten once in the field, even though he quickly recovered his feet, was quite content to come to terms. The younger man had demonstrated his astuteness, his courage, his power to organize, and his skill to negotiate, and was soon to display his ruthless treatment of a treacherous and vacillating opposition. The star of the young Caesar had made its appearance in the sky.

> Daphni, quid antiquos signorum suspicis ortus?
> Ecce Dionaei processit Caesaris astrum.

There was one wise man watching for that star and he was Publius Vergilius Maro.

The pact of Bononia brings us down to the end of the year 43. It was the beginning of the last tribulations of the poet and brings to a close the first Neapolitan years. Cisalpine Gaul had been looked upon as the stronghold of the Senate and the way it rallied to the support of Decimus Brutus and recruited his shattered army proves this to have been the truth. Cremona, in particular, had offended against the unformed and unsuspected triumvirate and its punishment was a foregone conclusion at a time when pretexts for confiscations were greatly desired. Asinius Pollio was left in charge and must at this date be looked upon as an out-and-out Antonian. During the year 42 he appears to have busied himself with the partition of lands to which he had been appointed, and Virgil, who had doubtless come up from the south to watch his own interests, enters his circle. It is not likely that more than a passing acquaintance had existed previously, since Pollio had been for many years in succession out of Rome and was considerably older than the poet. It is possible that Cornelius Gallus, fellow student of Virgil, who was charged by the triumvirs with the collection of tribute in these regions,[1] played a part in bringing the two together. Knowing as we do that Roman generals even under the most strenuous circumstances were accustomed to keep

[1] Servius to *Ecl.* vi. 64.

about them a coterie of congenial non-combatants, and recalling the literary ambitions of Pollio, we may assume that he welcomed the not unknown Vergilius to his head-quarters.

It is unthinkable that Virgil waited for the rumour of the confiscations to call him to Mantua. The provisional Government was desperately in need of money for the legions that were collecting for the campaign against Brutus and Cassius, and all Italy was called upon for assistance. Virgil, as the head of a household and the proprietor of a large estate, must have been at Mantua, and probably permitted himself to be mulcted of a handsome contribution with a good grace, though the ungodly alliance of his youthful hero with the overbearing enemy must have robbed his compliance of all pleasure. It may have been late in the year 42 before the dangers of confiscations loomed up. The allotment of so much land would have called for the organization of a great staff of clerks, surveyors, and arbitrators, all of which required time. The work itself must have proceeded tediously at best and only after several months of labour would the impious rod have threatened Mantua. When the calamity arrived there was no redress to be expected even from friendly commissioners. The arrival of one or the other of the triumvirs must be awaited. What if it should be Antony? What if the younger man should die, as was reported after Philippi?[1] We can imagine the poet penning the *Dirae* in such a moment.

The sky must have brightened a bit when the reassuring news was spread abroad that Octavianus was alive and approaching Rome. Antony had remained in the East. Yet the fortunes of the young Caesar were never at a lower ebb. His health had been poor throughout the campaign and all the credit of the victory went to his colleague. In Italy all was Antonian. Lucius Antonius, the brother, was consul, and Fulvia, the wife, was there, more to be dreaded than Lucius. The streets and squares of the capital were filled with throngs of ejected colonists surrounded by their wives and children. The veterans had not been satisfied and the victims were worse than dissatisfied. At such a moment, we may imagine, the

[1] Appian, *B. C.* v. 12.

poet waits with his petition; he is admitted to the presence of the godlike youth to whom he had dedicated his happy verses some fourteen years before, whom he had aided with his presence and his pen in the contentions following the assassination.

Hic illum vidi iuvenem, Meliboee.

He receives an order for the preservation of part of his lands and hastens back to Mantua only to find that he is too late.[1] His wide estates, sufficient for sixty veterans, are already assigned, and soldiers and centurions are swarming everywhere. In vain he demands that the order be carried out. In vain he asserts his rights against one intruder and then another. On one occasion to save his life he is forced to fling himself into the Mincius, on another to take refuge in the cabin of a friendly charcoal burner. Once he is rescued from the violence of a soldier by the intervention of Maecenas himself. In these stories there is nothing improbable or inconsistent. Similar scenes were being enacted all over Italy. In the First Eclogue, lines 11–12, we read:

undique totis
usque adeo turbatur agris.

Appian tells us that the soldiers defied the authorities, encroached upon their neighbours, and chose the best lands. The Virgil estate was doubtless a storm-centre. The evidence is too abundant and formidable to be set aside.[2]

While the acts of this individual drama were unfolding themselves in the once peaceful and secluded suburb of Mantua the major piece was being staged nearer to the centre of things. The delicate but indomitable Caesar was never permitted a moment of rest from sedition and anxiety from the day of his arrival in January, 41, until March of the following year, an interval of fifteen months. Lucius and Fulvia, who possessed some cunning and plenty of energy, and were chagrined at the absence of Marcus, set on foot the multifarious civil and military propaganda that was the rule in this epoch.

[1] *Ecl.* ix. 7 ff.

[2] General situation, Appian, v. 12–13; Virgil's encounters, Don. 20 and 63, Serv. *Ecl.* iii. 5 and 94, ix. 1 and 16, Schol. Bern. *Ecl.* ix, pref., Probus, pref. to *Ecl.*

The Perusine War in which this agitation culminated came to an end before the Ides of March of the year 40. Before this event, while Plancus, Ventidius Bassus, and Pollio are loitering on the boundary of Cisalpine Gaul, with Calenus, another Antonian, in the rear with more legions, there can have been no progress with the confiscations nor with the settlement of claims. By September of this year, the date of the Messianic Eclogue, all Virgil's troubles are over, and so we may assume that in this interval the friends, Pollio, Gallus, and Varus, indemnified the poet for his loss.[1] This assumption is strengthened by the fact that Varus, successor to Pollio, cannot have taken charge until Perusia fell and Pollio, choosing neutrality, handed over his legions to the triumvirs, for Varus needed no legions, Cisalpine Gaul having been in the interval annexed to Italy. In addition to this, we may judge it quite likely that these friends only received their own rewards after the victory and might not before that date have found themselves in a position to bestow the gift. We conclude, therefore, that Virgil experienced some two years of desperate anxiety, from the middle of 42 until the middle of 40, and only succeeded in obtaining satisfaction in the summer of 40.

A word must be added on the vexed question of the status of Cisalpine Gaul during the progress of the confiscations. Antony was determined to have it for his province after the murder of Julius but failed to wrest it from Decimus Brutus. Nevertheless he received it along with other parts for a period of five years by the terms of the pact of Bononia. After the battle of Philippi he acceded to the request of Octavianus for its annexation to Italy.[2] Letters were drawn up embodying the agreement and carried back to Rome, but the Antonian party in Italy soon renounced the whole arrangement.[3] Lucius and Fulvia began war. Calenus refused to hand over his eleven legions, which were only surrendered after his death when Perusia had fallen.[4] As for Pollio, Velleius informs us that

[1] Don. 19 'quia . . . indemnem se praestitissent'. We take this to be the Suetonian version; Don. 63 and others state that he recovered his fields.

[2] Appian, v. 3 and 22.

[3] Ibid. v. 14 and 22.

[4] Ibid. v. 12 and 51.

he continued to hold Venetia, which included Mantua, in the interests of Antony; from Appian we learn that he was at one time near to Perusia and in favour of attacking the Octavians.[1] Later he went to the north-east to head off Domitius, a partisan of Brutus, and succeeded in bringing him over to Antony's side. Meanwhile Ventidius and Plancus maintained their hostility until Lucius and Fulvia were beaten. Alfenus Varus probably remained in charge of the agrarian problem at Cremona.

The only possible inference from this accumulation of evidence is this, that the annexation of Cisalpine Gaul did not become a fact until it was reaffirmed in the new agreement made at Brundisium in the summer of the year 40. So long as the Antonians were strong in Italy the province could not be annexed;[2] this was a crucial point in their contention. Virgil states the case for us quite plainly in the First Eclogue, lines 27–32:

> Libertas; quae sera tamen respexit inertem,
> candidior postquam tondenti barba cadebat;
> respexit tamen et longo post tempore venit,
> postquam nos Amaryllis habet, Galatea reliquit:
> namque, fatebor enim, dum me Galatea tenebat,
> nec spes libertatis erat, nec cura peculi.

Galatea stands for Antony. Historical allusion is here interwoven with pastoral circumstance. In the Roman theatre, where local references were quickly caught in spite of misleading names, at a moment when the question of annexation was uppermost in the public mind, the interpretation would have been immediate and easy. The old man Tityrus had grown grey while waiting for liberty.

[1] Velleius, 76. 2; Appian, v. 35. [2] Appian, v. 22.

CHAPTER XI

THE FUGITIVE ALLEGORY

We noted in speaking of the *Dirae* how Virgil found a parable or an allegory in the persecutions of Bacchus by Lycurgus, King of the Edones, which implied the ravaging of vineyards, a mythical situation adapted to the expression of his own anguish at the loss of his lands. It is true that he does not enlarge upon this, and very naturally so. To dwell upon the crimes of Lycurgus would have led to direct incriminations of Octavianus, whom Virgil at no moment, in our opinion, wished to assail. He never in any of his works, either of the major or the minor corpus, cares to lay the blame for his misfortunes upon any individuals, only upon civil discord, which he several times bemoans, as in the *Dirae*, lines 82–3:

> O male devoti, praetorum crimina, agelli
> tuque inimica tui semper discordia civis.

and also in the First Eclogue, lines 72–3:

> En quo discordia civis
> produxit miseros!

Yet in the *Dirae* he begs of Battarus, that is, Bacchus, as one who had suffered like himself, to walk with him through his fields, his forests, his orchards, and his meadows and be a witness of his imprecations. There can be little doubt either of the identity of Battarus or of the inherent parable.

We believe we have here the inception of the fugitive allegory in the imagination of the poet which blossomed out after a short interval into the charming but fleeting allusiveness of the *Eclogues* and eventually into the massive secondary significances of the *Aeneid*. Before going so far, however, it is advisable to show the part played by the *Lydia* in this development. However susceptible of misinterpretation this somewhat unfortunate composition may be, when once the identity of

Lydia is recognized as the nymph of the Etruscan Mincius and the text is purged of the errors of palaeographers, the conception underlying the whole poem becomes not only innocent but extremely enlightening. As in the *Dirae*, from which it is not separated in the manuscripts, the prevailing emotion is merely anguish at the unrighteous privation of a beloved home. The thought of the golden age, before discord had entered into the world, and gods and heroes still sought the objects of their desires without rebuke or blame, comes naturally into his mind, but the motive of passion has only an allegorical significance. Virgil never coveted such conditions of life as he chose out of mythology for a contrast to his own misery. It is only the hard lot of mankind, the injustice of things, that he laments.

His attitude as a natural Epicurean, a lover of peace, is admirably expressed in our own day, if we make allowance for suitable mutations, in Tennyson's *Lotos-Eaters*:

> Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
> And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
> While all things else have rest from weariness?
> All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
> We only toil, who are the first of things,
> And make perpetual moan,
> Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
> Nor ever fold our wings,
> And cease from wanderings,
> Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
> Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
> 'There is no joy but calm!'
> Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

At this point in his career we may observe the unconscious schooling and training of Virgil approaching the season of maturity and fruition. The apt, intellectual boy at the age of sixteen, fresh from the Cremona schools, had already traversed the highways of literature and mythology. Now, after an interval of ten years during which he had studied and fought and suffered frustration of ambition, personal grief, and threatened loss of the means of life, he has traversed the by-ways of human thought; he has been up to the high places

and has descended into the depths. The period of acquisition has passed and the period of reflection has set in. Personal experience of affliction has succeeded upon the imaginative knowledge. Thus literature and mythology begin to take on a secondary significance in precisely the same way that incidents and stories of the Old Testament acquired a figurative significance to the early Christian. For example, as the persecutions of the prophets were recalled for the solace of the saints in their tribulations so the persecution of Bacchus induces Virgil to choose him as the witness of his curses in the *Dirae*. In like manner, as the happiness of Eden contrasted with the evil and misery of later days so the blamelessness of the age of gold is recalled for the sake of the contrast with the violence and injustice of the civil wars. Virgil is learning the meaning of parable. The fascination of the cryptic allusion has been discovered, and soon the presence of an inner circle of friends sharing common adventures will permit of the adoption of an allusive code of studied ambiguity, of which we can hardly find the key. It was called into being by the times. The Antonians must understand only in part what the Octavians are saying.

It is with the consciousness of this new phase in the poet's reflection that we must approach the study of the *Eclogues* and the *Aeneid*. The knowledge of the past is no longer sheer pedantry to him, as it was when he flaunted the Selii, Tarquitius, and Varro. It has become quickened with a strange, new life. It has become human again. Personal suffering has begun to furnish a key to the mysteries of the life of man. In the poor poet, driven by rude strangers from the haunts of his childhood, we find the prototype of the pious Aeneas expelled from the shrines of his native city. The present finds itself reflected in the past. All literature begins to take on a secondary meaning. The simple things become complex. He reads a new meaning into Theocritus. He begins to fill old bottles with new wine.

Nothing serves better to introduce the fleeting character of the allusions in the *Eclogues* than a slight consideration of the proper names employed. The Romans were long

accustomed to the typical value of names in life and in letters. Cicero proposed to Atticus that for purposes of concealment they should call themselves Laelius and Furius.[1] The names of men like Cato and Sulla, as well as older personages like the Curii, the Decii, and the Fabii, had acquired typical values. The name Sabellus [2] had come to denote a strict moralist and the cognomen Sabinus [3] was assumed by candidates for office to hint at pure extraction. It is perhaps in mockery of Sextus Clodius, the Sicilian tutor of Antony, that Virgil himself denotes him in his farewell to the Forum as Sextus Sabinus. He employs it in the same way in the phaselus parody to denote the muleteer praetor Ventidius Bassus. Virgil was himself known at Naples as Parthenias. In the *Eclogues* he seems for a moment in the first to be Tityrus but soon the dialogue drifts into implications of a sort that are quite incongruous with this identification. In the other Eclogues where Tityrus is mentioned the name appears to denote a youthful goatherd, slave to Menalcas. To the name Menalcas one can attach no stable value. In the ninth it seems to denote the poet since the slave Lycidas tells of his master's escape from peril and of the loss of part of his farm, which it was said he had saved by merit of his poetry. Again in the fifth the poet's identity may very well be concealed under this name since the apotheosis of Daphnis fits very well with the poet's Caesarian sentiments expressed elsewhere in the Fourth and First Eclogues and in the *Georgics* and *Aeneid*. Yet in that same Fifth Eclogue the lament for Daphnis might equally well have been ascribed to the poet under the name of Mopsus, though in the third the praise of Pollio and his poetry is similarly divided between Damoetas and Menalcas. Still again, in the second the poet is said to speak under the pseudonym of Corydon but the same name in the seventh has no particular significance. To other names like Damon, Alphesiboeus, and Meliboeus, not even a passing significance can be attached, although Lycoris of the tenth may well be more than Phyllis or Galatea or Amaryllis ; tradition says she was the same as Volumnia or Cytheris,

[1] *Ad Att.* ii. 19, 5. [2] Hor. *Ep.* i. 16, 49.
[3] Cic. *Ad Fam.* xv. 20, 1.

successively mistress of Antony, Brutus, and Gallus. Codrus is reported by the Servian commentary on the authority of Valgius to have been a contemporary poet.[1] Meliboeus and Moeris, in the first and ninth, may have possessed particular associations to such as recognized them to have been used in the bucolics of Messalla.[2]

In approaching the study of the *Eclogues* yet other points must be borne in mind : first, most of them were written for recitation and were subsequently presented in the theatres ; second, the Roman audience in the theatre, no matter what the play or what the name of the hero, was quick to catch the temporary aptness of any sentiment. For instance, on a certain occasion when an actor pronounced the words,

O dominum aequum et bonum,

the people applied them to Augustus, who happened to be present, and broke into universal applause.[3] The actors themselves would deliberately plan to make a hit in this fashion and Diphilus, the tragedian, once took his place upon the stage in such a way that he might innocently point in the direction of Pompey when he came to the line,

Nostra miseria tu es magnus——.

This occurred in the year 59 when Pompey's fame was under a cloud and no one missed the allusion. The spectators refused to let the play proceed and compelled the actor to repeat again and again the line,[4]

Eandem virtutem istam veniet tempus cum graviter gemes.

The context was of no consequence providing the line was applicable.

Now the novelty of Virgil's *facetiae* in the *Eclogues* appears to consist in the deliberate planning of ambiguous allusions. It is analogous to his use of phrases and lines from his own works or from Catullus, which he so embodies in his verses that all marks of the transfer are obliterated and the words fit so naturally in their new setting that their provenance

[1] To *Ecl.* vii. 22. [2] *Catalepton*, ix. 18.
[3] Suet. *Aug.* 53. [4] Valerius Maximus, vi. 2, 9 ; Cic. *Ad Att.* ii. 19, 3.

could not be proven. Those allusions that were intended for the circles of Pollio or Varus we leave to one side, but let us imagine ourselves in a Roman theatre in the autumn of the year 40, when the Antonians had scattered to the East. If an actor used gestures at all, in what direction would he point when he came to these words ?—

> Hic illum vidi iuvenem, Meliboee, quotannis
> bis senos cui nostra dies altaria fumant.

What would the actor do with his hands when he came to the following ?—

> Deus, deus ille, Menalca !

If the reciter would be bound to face towards Pollio, now consul, when he reached the passage :

> Teque adeo decus hoc aevi, te consule, inibit,
> Pollio, et incipient magni procedere menses,

what about the preceding line ?—

> Tuus iam regnat Apollo.

Virgil was doing more for Octavianus than Octavianus could do for Virgil.

The function of the theatre in Roman life is such an alien chapter to our minds that one may easily neglect the importance of public recitals in clinching Virgil's fame. Yet we may be sure that every hungry ear was strained to catch the sly allusions to every phase of the political and poetical contentions of the previous months, and we may be sure that the public went sadly astray in its conjectures. A tradition of these theatrical interpretations has probably come down to us in the commentaries and, though in detail they help us little, yet we cannot quite set them aside nor overlook them as testimony of the atmosphere of bitter propaganda in which they found their origin.

CHAPTER XII

THE POLLIO GROUP

Pollio was appointed to his post in Cisalpine Gaul at Bononia in November and doubtless was at his post by January, if not before, of the following year. There can be little doubt that he established his head-quarters at Cremona. This city had sided with Decimus Brutus, and it was the lands of Cremona that he was instructed to divide. What concerns us most at the moment is the circumstance that he would also establish there a centre of social functions. All camps must provide entertainment and all Romans were much addicted to the giving of dinners. Besides, Pollio was literary, and if Octavius and others improved and amused themselves by declamation before Mutina, we may well imagine the ambitious tragedian reciting his own lines—he was the founder of the recitation—and listening to others. Here are to be found the surroundings in which Virgil makes his real début as a poet. Here we would place the reading of Virgil mentioned in *Ecl.* iii. 84–5 :

> Pollio amat nostram, quamvis est rustica, musam ;
> Pierides, vitulam lectori pascite vestro.

Whether he composed other bucolics in this epoch and afterwards suppressed them we cannot know, but we have three preserved for us, Nos. ii, iii, and v of the extant collection, which are grouped together by the closing lines of the last named :

> Hac te nos fragili donabimus ante cicuta :
> haec nos *Formosum Corydon ardebat Alexim*,
> haec eadem docuit *Cuium pecus, an Meliboei* ?

The Corydon and Alexis Eclogue, a sort of pastoral elegy of hopeless love, is declared by reliable external evidence to have been recited at a dinner given by Pollio and to have so captured the imagination of the host that he made a gift to the poet of

a beautiful and gifted slave named Alexander.[1] To interpret the poem, however, as a pure pastoral hinting at the admiration of the author for the slave of the friend is just as vital an error as to see in the Fourth Eclogue a mere glorification of Pollio. Whatever it may have seemed to mean to Pollio and whatever it may have been intended to suggest to Pollio, the second must be read in the light of the theory of the fugitive allegory. It reflects in a more elusive form the phase of feeling that grew out of the plain parable of the *Dirae*, Bacchus and the sacrilegious Lycurgus, and the *Lydia* with the cryptic apostrophe of the Etruscan Mincius. Virgil is still mourning for his lands. The poet, as we always shall insist, is profoundly sincere, and his moods are very persistent. The autobiographical element is steadily submerged when he writes for recitation, but underneath is always to be discerned the deep emotional experience of the poet fructified by external events and social obligations.

Let us take the following lines of the conclusion of the *Lydia*, the very lines that most offend the casual reader, as a link with the *Corydon*:

> Infelix ego, non illo quo tempore natus
> quo facilis natura fuit. Sors O mea laeva
> nascendi miserumque genus, quo sera libido est.

Do they differ materially from the conclusion of the *Corydon*?

> Me tamen urit amor; quis enim modus adsit amori?

Not even the ancient commentators insist upon a salacious significance in this poem. Why insist upon it in the *Lydia*? Alexis is only Lydia in a mask. In the Eclogue the poet has deliberately hidden himself behind the elusive and meaningless name of the shepherd. Like Horace, he writes for the few. He will write down his genuine grief in the solitude of his room to afford himself some relief from his pain, but to the world he speaks only in parables. The hopeless love of Corydon is only the hopeless longing of the poet for his irrecoverable fields. The feminine Lydia is concealed under the masculine Alexis, though she becomes Nisa again in the Eighth Eclogue, where

[1] Servius. pref. to *Ecl.* ii; Don. 9. Virgil was invited to contribute a poem, *Ecl.* viii. 11–12.

Virgil, in what he thought was to be the closing number of this suite of pastorals, returns to the theme of the first. The Romans were so familiar with the use of cryptic names that the change of sex would not mislead them. Philargyrius, whom we believe to have preserved for us a series of identifications that had their origin in the theatre, sees a reference to Antony and the Antonians in lines 14–16 of this Eclogue:

> Nonne fuit satius tristis Amaryllidis iras
> atque superba pati fastidia? nonne Menalcan,
> quamvis ille niger, quamvis tu candidus esses?

Any mention of *superbia* in this epoch would point to Antony, whether rightly or wrongly, and the savage Fulvia would serve for a bitter Amaryllis.

It is perhaps this quality of Virgil's poetry that Horace describes as *facetus*. To render his *molle atque facetum*[1] as 'tender humour' seems to us inadequate, which would rather point to a hendiadys, as if we had *molle facetumque*. It is rather two distinct, though harmonious, qualities that we must seek to identify, a background and a contrast. Perhaps we may best elucidate it by speaking in terms of light, as the rhetoricians sometimes chose to do. Allowing that the subject is slender and the diction pretty, may we not assume that *mollis* describes the atmosphere created, the golden unreality of things, the sense of a pastoral fairyland remote from the cruel actualities of a contentious time? Over against this pervasive atmosphere we recognize a different light, the flash, the gleam, enduring but a second, the element denoted by *facetum*. These words are more than rhetorical terms drawn from the vocabularies of the masters who sought to characterize the various styles. Those who employed these terms did not have Virgil before them, and consequently cannot have given them a content apt to his compositions. Horace was in the secrets of the new school and we must seek an interpretation of his criticism in the *Eclogues* themselves. The word *mollis* may well denote the simple style, but it was Virgil's particular rendering of the simple style, that had never existed before, the sunshine of the pastoral scene, the soft aureate atmosphere of an unearthly

[1] Hor. *Sat.* i. 10, 44; enlightening article by Jackson, *Harvard Studies*, xxv.

Arcadian springtime, that Horace designated by the term. The content of a term of criticism can only be determined by an examination of the work to which it is applied.

This method we must adopt in defining *facetum*. We must find something in the *Eclogues* which it will aptly designate. Possibly it might be thought to describe the ribald jests of shepherds, for such would be conveniently denoted as *facetiae*, and Horace may have conveyed this meaning to certain readers, but we suspect that a significance somewhat less superficial was intended for those who might understand. Is it not the elusive allegory, the fugitive significance of lines here and there, the pretty tricks that the magician turns, enticing you into a meaning that the very next line rejects, the flash, the gleam, as contrasted with the steady charm, the incandescence, the glow? The ancient commentators help us a little, but not much. They saw the allegory but they insisted upon too literal an interpretation, and they failed to observe its fleeting character. They fill us with impatience, but we must not permit our annoyance to blind us to valuable clues. The technique of the Augustan was too subtle for men of the fourth century, and we are only beginning to get behind them, to emancipate ourselves. The art of the Augustans was of a character more secret and esoteric than we have thought. We may never attain to a complete understanding, but we have never attained to the best understanding possible.

In the interval between the Second Eclogue, where Virgil is mourning for his lands, and number three, which contains an oblique reference to his altercations with the veterans, we should assume that he went to Rome to meet Octavianus on his arrival in January, 41, secured an exemption for part of his estate, and returned to assert unsuccessfully his claims. The third falls in the spring of this year, lines 56–7:

> Et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos,
> nunc frondent silvae, nunc formosissimus annus.

The scene of the recitation is apparently laid in the headquarters of Pollio in Cisalpine Gaul, probably in Cremona, and was perhaps composed for a birthday party, just as the fourth

celebrated his consulship, and the eighth his anticipated triumph and the return to Rome. The reference to Virgil's recent encounter with Arrius and his escape by leaping into the Mincius is well known and already pointed out in antiquity:

> Ipse aries etiam nunc vellera siccat.

It constitutes a slight example of the fugitive allusion, and the denotation of Arrius by *aries*, a word with one syllable in common and the same number of syllables, may be compared with the suggestion of Eros by *error* in viii. 41:

> Ut vidi, ut perii! Ut me malus abstulit error!

It will be remembered that Varius had rebuked Virgil for using a Greek word in a similar connexion.

Our reason for inferring that the occasion is Pollio's birthday is derived from a line of the usual fugitive sort:

> Phyllida mitte mihi: meus est natalis, Iolla.

One must accustom himself to this obliquity in interpreting these poems. Pollio, no doubt, like all Romans, indulged his genius a bit, but to banter his host to his face would have seemed a shameless and artless liberty. Yet he may be permitted to do it playfully and indirectly. Does not the following couplet suggest a sacrifice to Pollio's genius?

> Pollio amat nostram, quamvis est rustica, musam.
> Pierides, vitulam lectori pascite vestro.

Menalcas vies with Damoetus in honouring the birthday:

> Pollio et ipse facit nova carmina: pascite taurum,
> iam cornu petat et pedibus qui spargat arenam.

The scene of the Eclogue is further defined by the reference to the spendthrift Caelius, who wound up his career with only enough land for a grave. He belonged to the Virgil country and we may suppose his story to be recent at the time of writing.

> Dic quibus in terris—et eris mihi magnus Apollo—
> tris pateat caeli spatium non amplius ulnas.

It may be added that this local reference is paired off in characteristic fashion with a riddle purely mythological and trite:

> Dic quibus in terris inscripti nomina regum
> nascantur flores, et Phyllida solus habeto.

In this Eclogue we find a cryptic allusion to the *Lydia*, in the last couplet of which we recall the reference to the poet's emaciation :

> Tantam Fata meae vitae fecere rapinam,
> ut maneam quod vix oculis cognoscere possis.

Even in calamity the saving sense of humour is not lacking to him. This Third Eclogue towards the end, lines 100–1, makes jest of earnest :

> Heu, heu, quam pingui macer est mihi taurus in ervo!
> Idem amor exitium est pecori pecorisque magistro.

Then in characteristic fashion the antistrophe displays but a pastoral superstition :

> His certe neque amor causa est; vix ossibus haerent:
> nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos.

This exemplifies the novelty of Virgil's *facetiae*, the flickering allusion.

Bearing in mind that we are here dealing with a composition of the spring of the year 41, and recalling the political situation of the moment, we may arrive at a somewhat better understanding of the poet's fortunes. This period saw the beginning of the propaganda of the Antonians that reached its height and terminated in the fiasco of Perusia. The young Octavianus, who returned in ill health from Philippi, was held in contempt and regarded as a pawn that had played its part and might now be swept off the board. As Cicero had phrased it before, he had been distinguished and might now be extinguished. So Fulvia and Lucius started in to employ the same tactics that Marcus had employed against the Senate, and Octavianus against both Marcus and the Senate; they attempted to handle the situation by the use of armed forces in the neighbourhood of the capital. This seemed a particularly safe and easy procedure when they knew that four Antonian generals with legions lay within easy striking distance to the north. Yet they counted too much upon their own audacity and precipitancy, and too little upon the determination and persistence of the youthful and invalid Caesar.

What interests us at the moment is the recognition of a

literary propaganda side by side with the political agitation against the resident member of the triumvirate. Antony, it must be observed, differed from his model Julius in the fact that he surrounded himself with a literary as well as a political and military circle. He was a lavish entertainer, and in his reckless openhandedness built up a following that may even have furnished some fruitful suggestions to the prudent and more talented patrons of the Octavian coterie. Sextus Clodius, the rhetorician, was the recipient of no less than two thousand acres of tax-free Leontine land,[1] and the poet Anser and his ilk were enriched with gifts in the Campanian territory. Thus we interpret Cicero's reference to the Geese, *Anseres*, who are to be driven out of that region : we take *Anseres* to stand for Anser, Bavius, Maevius, and others.[2] That these men were busy with their eulogies of friends and lampoons upon enemies in this interval is manifest from the *Eclogues*. In the Third Eclogue Virgil seems to take the aggressive and makes an attack upon Bavius and Maevius, lines 91–2 :

> Qui Bavium non odit amet tua carmina, Maevi,
> atque idem iungat vulpes et mulgeat hircos.

The point of Virgil's satire lies in this, that these two poets regarded themselves as brothers and shared in common all they possessed.[3] Virgil invites them to share ignominy and ridicule.

That the Octavian group was self-conscious and informally organized is fairly well manifest. They appear to have called themselves the Swans as opposed to the Geese. Thus in the Ninth Eclogue, lines 27–9, we find :

> Vare, tuum nomen, superet modo Mantua nobis,
> Mantua, vae miserae nimium vicina Cremonae,
> cantantes sublime ferent ad sidera *cycni*.

What meaning can we here attribute to the word Swans unless it means Virgil and his brother poets ? A few lines further we read :

> Nam neque adhuc Vario videor, nec dicere Cinna
> digna, sed argutos inter strepere *anser olores*.

This couplet incidentally refers to the preceptorship of Varius

[1] Cic. *Phil.* ii. 101. [2] *Phil.* xiii. 11. [3] Philargyrius, ad loc.

and indicates it as existing previous to this epoch ; it includes Cinna in the circle, and it denotes the poet himself, with characteristic modesty, as the Goose among the Swans. Are not the Swans the Octavians? We are not sure that we may not see a play upon the words *candidus* and *niger* with a similar innuendo. Philargyrius sees a reference to Antony, *Ecl.* ii, lines 14–16 :

> Nonne fuit satius tristis Amaryllidis iras
> atque superba pati fastidia? nonne Menalcan,
> quamvis ille *niger*, quamvis tu *candidus* esses?

Of course, the reference to Antony and his Egyptians in the commentary is anachronistic and may be identified as one of the theatrical interpretations of later years. Yet a passage of Horace, *Sat.* i. 5, 39–42, gives plausibility to the hypothesis that ' whiteness ' is employed in these poems as a denotation of party :

> Postera lux oritur multo gratissima ; namque
> Plotius et Varius Sinuessae Vergiliusque
> occurrunt, animae, qualis neque *candidiores*
> terra tulit, neque quis me sit devinctior alter.

Out of this little group of Epicurean friends we know the Augustan circle to have grown, and we are inclined to think that Horace is not only affirming their candour and sincerity but also hinting at a sobriquet. He is, in fact, *facetus*, flickering between two meanings. The *candidus* Daphnis of the Fifth Eclogue may thus suggest party affiliations, the use of colours to denote factions being universally familiar from the circus.

The Fifth Eclogue is explicitly grouped with the second and third by the concluding verses, and this means that it belongs in the Pollio group. It must be regarded as the last to be composed in the epoch of Pollio's command in Cisalpine Gaul, and might be fancied to have been composed for a final entertainment before his suite dispersed. It will fall in the interval between the spring of 41, that is, the date of the third, and September of 40, that is, the date of the fourth, when Pollio is entering upon his consulship. It must belong, however, to the period immediately succeeding the conclusion of the Perusine War in March, 40, because Pollio must have departed after that event to negotiate the second pact between Antony

and Octavianus. In the opening verses we find the conventional rivalry of shepherds employed to lead up to a contest of song. According to the scholiasts the shepherd Menalcas, who banters Mopsus on his jealousy of Amyntas, represents Virgil teasing Aemilius Macer, his own countryman, about Cornificius, who is represented by Amyntas. There is a hint of the presumption of Cornificius, who is likened to Marsyas, the musician who was flayed alive for his challenge of Apollo :

> Quid si idem certet Phoebum superare canendo?

One need not accept such identifications, and yet one can hardly afford to ignore them ; they reflect the atmosphere of contention in which the earlier Eclogues were undoubtedly written.

The bantering, however, soon comes to an end, and Menalcas consoles his young friend by telling him that it was all in jest. Thereupon we have the treatment of the principal theme of the Eclogue, consisting of an elegy for the unhappy Daphnis, sung by Mopsus, and his apotheosis, by Menalcas. It has been thought from ancient times that the person honoured is Flaccus, a younger brother of the poet, and this identification possesses the authority of Suetonius, although he also mentions the more favoured presumption that Julius is the subject. It seems to us, recalling the unwavering devotion of Virgil to the Julian *gens* and the restraining circumstances of the moment, when outspoken declarations would have been untactful and premature, very much wiser to discern an element of fugitive allusion, both to the dead and to the living Caesar. The characterization flashes in the poet's peculiar facetious way between the real and the unreal, between mythology and fact. The basis of the poem is undoubtedly the fable of the unhappy Sicilian Daphnis, upon which the poet is free to fall back at any moment. From the death of the mythical shepherd we pass to the description of the prodigies that are elsewhere related in connexion with the death of Julius, and these dissolve in turn into pastoral images of the failure of the crops and the withering of the flowers. The conclusion of the first strophe is purely bucolic.

We are inclined to believe that Virgil in this Eclogue is

glancing at the feelings that would have obtained if the reports of the death of Octavianus, which were current after Philippi, had turned out to be true. To these imaginary circumstances the omens that accompanied the death of Julius are appropriately transferred, and so the poet attains a curious design: he glorifies Julius, he pays a tribute of devotion to Octavianus, and he dazzles the reader with the flashing of a light that will not come to rest. The song of Menalcas is similarly ambiguous, but the first measure of it concludes with words that forecast the First Eclogue, where we know that he means Octavianus:

Deus, deus ille, Menalca!

In this light we see the fifth as the prolusion of the first. The flight of Virgil's fancy is wilful as the flight of the butterfly and he is constantly escaping us, although it is not wholly impossible to follow. Just as his grief for his lost Lydia, the nymph of his own streams, dissolves into the hopeless passion of Corydon for Alexis, so this Menalcas, for our misleading, becomes Tityrus in the first. He will not let his names have a steady significance any more than he will permit his images to march consistently. One moment his fancy alights upon the earth and the next it is flitting in the unsubstantial sunshine. Of it one cannot say:

I've watched you now a full half-hour
Self-poised upon that yellow flower.

It settles but for a moment, and then is gone.

The songs of Mopsus and Menalcas are significantly separated. They are related as the panels of a stately doorway such as the poet describes in the opening lines of the Sixth Aeneid. There is a sharp note of grief in the lament of Mopsus, a mournful, retrospective note, but the hymn of Menalcas is consistently happy and prospective. There is an aureate haze in the central background concealing and revealing the colours and contours of Elysian fields. It stands to the Messianic Eclogue as that pause in the springtime when all the woods stand in a mist of green, and nothing perfect, stands to the full foliage and glory of the early summer. It is full of the *mollitia* that Horace implies in his characterization of Virgil, the sense of windless

calm, of nature at rest, the muteness of living but insensate things, the noiseless flitting of woodland nymphs, the beauty of rustic altar scenes, of simple worship far from bustling towns, of strange dances of satyrs in quiet groves, and the soft piping of shepherd boys, a fictive Elysium in a warring world. Yet the fiction is hardly convincing. It is proleptic rather than unreal, and the translation of Daphnis is merely a pretext for his praise. Daphnis is more concerned with earth than heaven; his altars are paired with his own Apollo's and the benefactions of Ceres and Bacchus to mankind shall in his kind deeds be once more reiterated. The fugitive allegory is here to be seen at its prettiest. Time is abolished. The living and the dead, the past, the present, and the future, are all dismayingly combined.

The Eclogue ends in a significant jest which inclines us to believe that the poet represents himself as Menalcas rather than Mopsus. At this season the contentions of the poet-proprietor with the veterans is fresh in mind and his rival quite fittingly presents him with a club symmetrically adorned with brazen studs.

> At tu sume pedum quod me cum saepe rogaret
> non tulit Antigenes—et erat tum dignus amari—
> formosum paribus nodis atque aere, Menalca.

It will be recalled that in the *Aeneid* the significance of gifts is carefully studied out.[1]

In point of time and in the development of the fugitive allegory the Fourth Eclogue occupies a place between the fifth and the first. It belongs to the early autumn of the year 40, when Pollio's court has reassembled in Rome and his literary entourage is more or less merged in the society of the capital. Octavianus, for the first time since he threw himself into the political struggles, has opportunity to draw breath and reconnoitre his friendships. The elements of which his permanent forces were destined to be composed have been eliminated from the rest by the sifting of hard experience. The Neapolitan group, consisting of Virgil, Varius, Tucca, and Quintilius Varus,

[1] A robe of the unchaste Helen for Dido, *Aen.* i. 647; the filthy Salius is given a shield with which to conceal himself, v. 359; the luckless Nisus is promised a bowl of unhappy Dido, ix. 266.

were already assembled before the murder of Julius, but their patron for the moment, for want of a better, was Epicurus. Temporarily separated by Virgil's tribulations, they are now free to reassemble under a more present patron. The executive group, Agrippa and Maecenas, tested and found alike capable and faithful during trying contests, now unites with the literary group, and the Augustan circle is fairly launched. It is Virgil, who grew intimate with Maecenas during the confiscations, who, in all probability, brings the two groups together. Later, it is certain, he introduced Horace and vouched for his worth.[1] In our opinion it is Virgil, more than any other single individual, that founds the circle.

It would seem a very singular thing, and very unworthy of him, if during the uncertainty that prevailed between the return of Octavianus from Philippi and the peace of Brundisium he was thinking only of his acres. The only hope of saving his substance lay in saving the control of things to his leader, and when he found himself in Pollio's domain, after the pact of Bononia, it coincided with his own interests and his own desires to win the adherence of Pollio to Octavianus. For this double purpose he probably accepted or sought an invitation to enrol in his suite. What he said and how he conducted himself we cannot know, but we have the poetry and may justly deduce from it what evidence it affords. The first two poems of the group, the second and the third, as we know both from internal and external evidence, were calculated to win Pollio's interest, protection, and friendship. The fifth, by its conclusion explicitly stated to constitute a triad with the other two, exhibits in a form sufficiently manifest the ulterior drift of Virgil's feelings. Even the vanity of Pollio could not presume to attach to itself the praise of Daphnis. Somewhere there was a greater than himself, it is intimated, to whom they might both alike adhere. Pollio, once Antony's lieutenant, if he moves with his literary friend, will attach himself to the heir of Caesar.

In order to make more plain the campaign of Virgil and the way it worked out let us make a series of the Fifth, Fourth, and First Eclogues. Not one of the whole collection is so mysterious

[1] *Sat.* i. 6, 54.

as the fifth. It certainly enshrines a veiled praise of Julius, but this will not explain the whole of it. This encomium fails to carry us beyond the strophe of Mopsus. The antistrophe of Menalcas drifts into a sphere of ideas that brings to mind the godlike Octavianus. Note the words of line 64:

Deus, deus ille, Menalca!

Can any thoughtful person fail to recall them when he peruses the First Eclogue, line 6?

O Meliboee, deus nobis haec otia fecit!

Take the fifth again, lines 65–6, and recall the historic association of Octavianus with Apollo:

Sis bonus O felixque tuis! En quattuor aras:
ecce duas tibi, Daphni, duoque altaria Phoebo.

Place beside these the tenth line of the fourth:

Casta fave Lucina: tuus iam regnat Apollo.

Just as we see in the minor dialogues of Plato the emergence of the language of the theory of ideas, so here we perceive the beginnings of the cult of the Octavian Apollo. Virgil is not merely the social factor that furnishes the solvent for the various elements of which the Augustan coterie was composed. At the same time he furnishes the cult and the ritual, not rashly or precipitately, but with quiet and puzzling caution. As the muses lead him gently by the hand, so he softly guides the imaginations of men. The chaos of clashing systems dissolves into the vision of a new heaven and a new earth. He is the poet and the prophet.

If we are right in our assumption that Virgil at this juncture foresees his way more clearly than Octavianus himself and realizes the possibility of performing a service of which the young triumvir himself did not quite apprehend the need, then the Fifth Eclogue is the preliminary step in the passage from the Pollio group to the fourth and first. The shadowy conception of a new god that floats in the background of this futuristic landscape in the company of a deified Julius and a mythical Daphnis is no other than the parent of this scion of Jove that is to be. If the child is the child of Pollio then

Virgil is a blunderer and no continuity can be discovered in his poetizing. If the child is Caesar's, then Virgil is crossing from Pollio's court to the new one that is forming. He never was in doubt of his own loyalty. Only he was not content to be loyal alone. He would lead others. By his poetry he would sanctify the new dynasty in the hearts of men. He could not lead them on the battle-field, but he could mould their imaginations.

In this line of thought we hope to throw additional light upon the fourth. The valuable and enlightening discussions of this poem have fallen short of quite clearing up its whole intention. Just as the fifth, which belongs to the Pollio group and was very probably read for the first time in his circle, contains in a veiled significance the praise of Julius and still more of his heir, so the fourth, which exalts Pollio in a few outstanding lines, turns to the glorification of the expected child of Octavianus in stanzas that touch unprecedented heights. It is true that Pollio's son, born at a date unknown to us but not far removed, was audacious enough to refer them to himself,[1] but the excessiveness of his presumption we know from the lips of Augustus, and it may be that the grim founder of the principate was thinking of the Fourth Eclogue when he uttered those words.[2] Yet to assume that Virgil was so exalting the unborn son of Pollio in the autumn of the year 40, when the star of Octavianus was shining in a clear sky, leaves us too much to explain and Virgil too much to retract. More likely it seems that the poem is part of the literary propaganda of the time, a pretty pamphlet in the poetical campaign that was intended to cement the new friendships, confirm the new order, and cast a glamour over its future. The Pollio circle is to be merged into the Augustan, and it was.

It must be noted how Virgil is ready with his verses at every vicissitude of the political game. He was a man of destiny from the moment that he saw the divinity of the lad Octavius in the class-room of Epidius. The *Culex*, the Noctuinus epigrams, the couplet of September 44 asserting the apotheosis of Julius,

> Nocte pluit tota, redeunt spectacula mane:
> commune imperium cum Iove Caesar habet;

[1] Asconius in Servius to line 11. [2] Tac. *Ann.* i. 13.

the lampoons against Tillius Cimber and Ventidius Bassus, are all of one piece. This is the work of the unrecognized prophet of the principate. After the pact of Bononia he soon recovers from his disappointment and throws his influence upon the side of Octavianus in Cisalpine Gaul. He is ready with the Daphnis Eclogue when Perusia falls. He is ready with the Messianic Eclogue when the expectation of an heir becomes public knowledge in September of 40. The date is certain. Pollio is *consul suffectus*, lines 11–12:

> Teque adeo decus hoc aevi te consule inibit,
> Pollio, et incipient magni procedere menses,

The autumn equinox is clearly denoted by line 50:

> Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum.

Thus we recognize a gradation and a transition: two Pollio Eclogues, ii and iii, the distinct Caesarian note in the fifth, and the definite exaltation of the new heir of the Caesars in the fourth. Pollio is relegated to second place, and in the First Eclogue he is not named. The first marks Virgil's definite conquest of his self-chosen patron.

It must be discussed here, although it does not belong to the Pollio group. It is the most courageous of all. The severities of the new confiscations under Alfenus Varus, who succeeded Pollio after the fall of Perusia in March of the year 40, were a scandal; the rod was run so close to Mantua that nothing but swamps were left to her;[1] Varus seems to have indulged a private spite, and was taken to task by Cornelius Gallus in a speech that was long extant. Virgil speaks straight from the shoulder about it to Octavianus in lines of bitter pathos, 47–9:

> Fortunate senex, ergo tua rura manebunt,
> et tibi magna satis quamvis lapis omnia nudus
> limosoque palus obducat pascua iunco!

Looking back to these words in the happier years that followed, it seemed to Virgil that he had spoken boldly. Recall the last two lines of the *Georgics*:

> carmina qui lusi pastorum *audaxque iuventa*,
> Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi.

[1] Servius to *Ecl.* ix. 10; Schol. Bern. to *Ecl.* viii. 6.

He did play a bold part. He did not win the post of prophet without a risk. This First Eclogue puts forward as never before, we may believe, the intolerable injustice of the confiscation system, and must have had no little influence in driving home to the conscience of the young princeps the necessity of some more merciful and provident policy for the remuneration of military service. Virgil had courage. He made himself the champion of the evicted, and he planted his protests where protests counted. He was a man, and he spoke out as a man to a man. No wonder that in after-days he seemed to himself to have been bold, nor is it any wonder that Augustus thought it worth while to ask his advice about the principate some thirteen years later. He was a candid friend.

The date of this piece is not so obscure as it seems. The reference to the drastic measures of Alfenus Varus already mentioned places it later than March of 40, and this is confirmed by a definite reference to the annexation of Cisalpine Gaul to Italy that became effective when Varus succeeded Pollio. It will be recalled that Varus took charge without legions. Long had the Transpadanes waited for their liberty. The old man, Tityrus, stands for the province. He had grown grey with waiting. The meaning flickers bitterly between the two significations of *libertas*, but there is no mistaking the inward sense. So long as Antony had held the reins there had been no hope of freedom. The following lines must be read with two ears, 27–32 :

> Libertas ; quae sera tamen respexit inertem,
> candidior postquam tondenti barba cadebat ;
> respexit tamen et longo post tempore venit,
> postquam nos Amaryllis habet, Galatea reliquit :
> namque, fatebor enim, dum me Galatea tenebat,
> nec spes libertatis erat, nec cura peculi.

He who cannot separate the pastoral circumstance from the allusion to fact has not learned to read the *Eclogues*, does not know the meaning of *facetus*.

This First Eclogue, standing in a series of diminishing ambiguity, must be later than the fourth, which belongs to September of 40. There is no preface or dedication, which

leads us to conclude that the author read it before the face of Octavianus in the autumn of that year, the first of that series of recitations of which we read in the tradition of the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*. The young Transpadane has at last succeeded in gaining the recognition of the young princeps whom he had recognized as his leader some fourteen years before. The servant was wiser than the master. He was compelled to demonstrate his usefulness. The *Eclogues* were immediately recited in the theatres, and Virgil at the same time voiced the indignation and the aspirations of the Roman world. To-day he still speaks for it. He made himself its voice.

It is timely to bring to attention at this point the discovery of a singular and unexpected gift of Virgil's, his wonderful charm as a reader of his own verses. It is the more remarkable as we possess the word of Melissus, freedman of Maecenas, that in speech he was extremely slow and almost like an uneducated person.[1] Yet Suetonius reports it on the authority of Seneca that Julius Montanus vouched for the beauty of his voice and the aptness of his delivery in recitation.[2] There is nothing inconsistent in these seemingly divergent traditions. The hesitancy in public was doubtless due to a shyness that vanished in the company of congenial friends. It may also be very well true that Pollio, who recited his own compositions, gave to the poet his first opportunity of displaying this gift and made it known to Octavianus, so that after all he really placed the rising member of his suite under permanent obligation. Starting with this assumption it may be inferred that the First Eclogue was presented on that occasion in the latter part of the year 40 when Virgil was for the first time the guest of the young Caesar. It marked the moment when he graduated from the circle of the lesser man to that of the greater. Success at last !

To the Pollio group belongs also the Eighth Eclogue, but the date of it falls a full year later than the fourth, and Virgil's circumstances have greatly changed. We may with good reason picture him comfortably re-established at Naples in the congenial Epicurean brotherhood with which we find him

[1] Don. 16. [2] Ibid. 29.

still associated in 37 on the occasion of the journey to Brundisium. He no longer possesses a home in Mantua. The confiscations had completely altered the conditions of that country, transforming the large and opulent estates of republican days to small holdings occupied by hardy and uncouth veterans whose vicinity would have rendered life intolerable to its former owners. Nor is it possible that he yet possessed the house on the Esquiline adjoining the gardens of Maecenas, who at this time could hardly have begun the exploitation of the hideous Esquiline quarter where his sumptuous palace and grounds were subsequently established. It follows that his only home is at Naples, where he resumed his interrupted life with his former friends and what was left of his family. In the interim his father, his brother Flaccus, and his mother may have passed away. Suetonius, who may be trusted in matters of fact, must have known that the brother died about the time of the composition of the Fifth Eclogue, and the mother is said to have died soon afterwards.[1] Since she had married a second time it follows that the father, who was living when the Mantuan disaster threatened, cannot have long survived that period. Thus the infant half-brother, Valerius Proculus, may have been his only charge.

The complexion of society had also changed. Down to the year 40 the separation of the Empire into East and West was barely thought of, and Italy was looked upon as common ground of the two triumvirs. The court of Antony remained in Italy, and the whole country swarmed with active Antonians rendered petulant through jealousy of Octavianus and the expectation of their patron's speedy return, but after the year 40 the headquarters of the Antonians is definitely established in Athens, where Octavia took up her residence. It is also true that Cleopatra's mischievous ways effected soon a practical removal to Alexandria. Thus the atmosphere of Italy is cleared and the tone of society becomes preponderantly Octavian. It may even be that the Geese are at last driven from the Campanian fields. It is recorded in the chronicle of Hieronymus that the poet Bavius died in the year 35 in Cappadocia, and doubtless

[1] Donatus-Suetonius, 14; Philargyrius to *Ecl.* v. 22.

he had followed his master to the Orient. Moreover, the tenth epode of Horace is a stinging propempticon to Maevius setting out for Greece. Consequently we may assume that he too was seeking the courts of his lord. Cornificius, who could not endure to recognize the merit of Virgil, has met his fate in Africa.[1] Thus the Octavians may be thought to be enjoying a coveted tranquillity.

The Eighth Eclogue looks forward to Pollio's triumph over the Salonites, who dwelt near the head of the Adriatic and gave the cognomen of Saloninus to the conqueror's son. Since the anticipated triumph is set down for the 25th of October, 39, it follows that the Eclogue is somewhat earlier, and one might suspect that this tribute of poesy was intended to evade the burden and necessity of a more laborious praise. A timely gift of smaller cost, it must be observed, will often forestall the bestowal of a more pretentious offering, and we are not sure that Virgil does not foresee the embarrassment of refusing his patron a composition upon his exploits which he could hardly avoid and could not grant.

The poem resembles the fifth, consisting of matched monologues divided between two shepherds. Pursuing his usual practice of avoiding any consistent use of proper names, he assigns these songs to Damon and Alphesiboeus in place of Mopsus and Menalcas. It resembles the *Dirae* in the use of a refrain, and may be thought to grow out of the sentiment therein contained. Virgil is thinking of his lands. The nymph Nisa, who is given in marriage to the unlovely Mopsus, is only his own Lydia, nymph of the Etruscan Mincius, passing into the possession of the brutal veteran. The key to this interpretation lies in line 58:

> Omnia vel medium fiant mare: vivite, silvae!

Recall the similar farewell to his fields in the *Dirae*, lines 89–90:

> Dulcia rura valete et Lydia dulcior illis,
> et casti fontes et, felix nomen, agelli!

The former line has long been construed by a kind of criticism that will soon, we hope, be considered picayune to be a

[1] Ascon. in Don. auct. 67; Eusebius, *Ol.* 184, 4 = 41 B. C.

mistranslation of Theocritus,[1] but its real explanation is to be found in the *Dirae*, where he calls upon the sea to pour over his lands and overwhelm them, or the rivers to leave their beds and turn them into one vast lake of waters. Recall the following lines, 61–2 and 74–6 :

> *Dicantur mea rura ferum mare :* nauta, caveto
> rura, quibus diras indiximus, impia vota.
> . . . . . .
> Praecipitant altis fumantes montibus imbres
> et late teneant diffuso gurgite campos,
> qui dominis infesta minantes stagna relinquant.

We have here an illustration of the Virgilian persistence of sentiment, and at the same time his way of parodying his own words. When he wrote

> Omnia vel medium fiant mare

he is only reproducing his own phrase,

> Dicantur mea rura ferum mare,

and probably not thinking of Theocritus at all ; each phrase constitutes four feet of an hexameter line.

At the same time we have found the clue to the song of Damon. It is one with the Lydian lament and the hopeless love of Corydon. The scenes of boyhood are recurring to his mind. Who can believe that the exquisite lines

> Saepibus in nostris parvam te roscida mala—
> dux ego vester eram—vidi cum matre legentem.
> Alter ab undecimo tum me iam acceperat annus ;
> iam fragilis poteram a terra contingere ramos.
> Ut vidi, ut perii ! Ut me malus abstulit error !

do not enshrine a living incident ?

Matched with this complaint of Damon, vivid with glimpses of the dearest chapters of his lost Elysium, that reappear, we may pause to note, at a later time in the song of Orpheus mourning for his lost Eurydice, is the purely fictitious recital of Alphesiboeus and his tale of rustic magic. Once more we must observe the flickering between the real and the unreal, the autobiographical and the external, the significant and the

[1] Idyll. i. 34 : ἐνάλια taken for ἔναλλα.

merely imaginative, which we pointed out in certain alternate verses of the Third Eclogue and also in the pastoral strains of Mopsus in the fifth as contrasted to the pointed references to Octavianus in the strains of Menalcas. The key to the fugitive allegory, we do not believe, is quite lost. It was always perplexing, even to contemporaries, and Pollio himself may not have understood quite so well just what was signified as the more discerning Maecenas, nor could the more orthodox Messalla, we suspect, much less the ruthless Varus, have read the glimmering message quite so clearly as the knowing Horace, yet all would realize the beauty of the vagueness of these aureate mists, and all ears would capture a nameless pleasure from the tuneful ditties of those soft melodious pipes. About those exquisite unrealities there was a teasing semblance of reality perpetually provoking and perpetually eluding recognition.

Never before had the Latin language been moulded with such sweet and delicate simplicity nor the Roman fancy bewitched away from the sordid and cruel ambitions of a pedestrian world to such an Arcadian paradise of dreams, a mirage of earth painted on the vault of heaven with brushes dipped in colours of dawn, noon, and evening. Never had such exquisite pipings, stilling the din of all earthly sounds, floated up to human ears out of the unknown, invisible distances, melodies of the goat-footed god and the muses whose joy is in the countryside. In these Eclogues the poetic art of Virgil, both in respect to the luminosity of the language and the bright flash of the fugitive allusion, both in respect to the deliciousness of the appeal to the visual imagination and the abundance of light literary reminiscence, stands apart by as wide an interval from all his previous compositions as the graceful plastic art of Augustan sculpture surpasses the homely terra-cotta figures of Etruscan artisans. Long and tedious is the ascent of Parnassus, but the view and the ecstasy are denied until the moment that you reach the very summit. Virgil's success was long postponed, and when it came it came unexpectedly.

CHAPTER XIII

THE VARUS GROUP

It is manifest that the arrangement of the *Eclogues* is approximately chronological: thus the dated Eclogues, four, eight, and ten, written in 40, 39, and 37 respectively, stand in this order; secondly, the group consisting of two, three, and five manifestly stand in the same order; moreover, the seventh combines the names of Corydon and Alexis in the same relationship that we observe in the second, while the ninth appears to presume the previous publication of the song of Mopsus in the fifth. To oppose to these backward references we cannot quote a single forward-looking reference, and thus are confirmed in our belief that the general arrangement follows the order of composition. From this we infer that the Varus group, as a whole, is to be placed later than the Pollio group, which is consistent with the knowledge gleaned from external evidence, that Varus succeeded Pollio in the charge of Cisalpine allotments. Now Pollio cannot have relinquished his command [1] until the conclusion of the Perusine War, which occurred in March, 40, and Varus was *consul suffectus* in 39, and consequently we must recognize the period of the supreme importance of Varus between these dates.

It does not follow from the above deduction that the Varus group falls later than the termination of Pollio's command. The assignation of lands was regularly entrusted to commissions consisting of several men, and Varus was probably a member of this board before the retirement of Pollio, but after this event he became the chief, and appears to have completed the work of settlement with a ruthlessness not before ventured upon. This assumption is vouched for by an incident quoted in the Bern [2] scholia, and is in itself highly probable.

[1] Velleius, ii. 76, 2 'nam Pollio Asinius cum septem legionibus, diu retenta in potestate Antonii Venetia . . .'

[2] To *Ecl.* viii. 6; also Servius to ix. 10.

After the Perusine War the power of the Octavian party was as manifestly enhanced as the audacity of the Antonians was diminished, and Octavianus doubtless started in to apply his policy of prompt and drastic thoroughness. Thus the hopes of Virgil that a part of his lands might be spared were speedily dashed to the ground, and, as we believe, he was forced to content himself with a partial equivalent in cash contributed from the purses of Pollio, Varus, and Cornelius Gallus. Thus we interpret the indemnification mentioned by Suetonius, our best authority, setting aside the inconsistent inferences drawn from the poems themselves, which we are just as well equipped to judge as the scholiasts to deduce. This gift in money Virgil probably received before the month of September in the year 40, the date of the Messianic Eclogue, when no cloud appears to be darkening the sky.

The group consists of numbers vi, vii, and ix, the first and last containing explicit references to Varus. The middle one is placed in the group because of its position in the collection, and because of notices by the ancient commentators. None of the three can be dated individually, but the seventh presumes the second and the ninth the fifth, while all must be earlier than the tenth, which is certainly last. Within the group itself there are no cross references. Yet the ninth, following the eighth, which falls before Pollio's triumph in October of 39, would incline us to place it in the term of the last months of that year, when Varus was *consul suffectus*. Lastly, the order being in general chronological, we should place the sixth and seventh before the eighth, which contains internal evidence pointing to Virgil's intention of closing the series, line 11:

A te principium, tibi desinam.

When Virgil was called from his Neapolitan retreat to protect his interests in Gaul he was doubtless thrown at once into relationship with those in authority, Pollio, Varus, and Cornelius Gallus. The latter appears to have been his fellow pupil in earlier days, and now, in his capacity as collector of tribute on behalf of the triumvirate,[1] was doubtless called upon

[1] Servius to vi. 64.

to urge the merits of his former friend. Of the three it seems likely that the last named was the best friend of the poet, but the former two surpassed him in authority. Varus and Pollio, no doubt, maintained a kind of court, after the manner of Roman officers, and gave and received invitations to dinners and entertainments. Both were literary and both were ambitious, and, in that age of intense individualism, probably set a high value upon their own tastes, judgements, and general importance. It is in this atmosphere that we believe the literary activity of Virgil to have begun. The calamity came to him as a sudden and excruciatingly painful blow, and depressed his spirits to such a degree that the previous disappointment in the Forum must have seemed mild by comparison, but it awakened the manhood in him and fructified his genius. In spite of his agony he kept his balance, played a courageous part, and left no stone unturned to secure his means of life for future days. To Pollio, as the superior in authority, he naturally addressed himself first, as the series of Eclogues demonstrates, but to Varus it was scarcely less needful to pay a timely homage.

The display of talent in one quarter is sure to bring invitations in a rival quarter, and when Virgil recited the *Corydon* at an entertainment of Pollio's it was a foregone conclusion that Varus would request a similar tribute of admiration. It is thus that we understand the Seventh Eclogue, which, in respect of content, most resembles the second and third, especially the latter. In the third we find two shepherds, Damoetas and Meliboeus, engaging in a contest of poetry before Palaemon, who acts as judge. In the other we have Corydon and Thyrsis contending before Daphnis, who gave the prize to Corydon, while Meliboeus was only a witness and relates the incident. Thus the seventh is observed to be a companion piece to the third, and we should suggest that its original presentation took place at a dinner and entertainment given by Varus as a sequel to similar hospitality offered by Pollio. It is obvious that the two poems were composed in the same frame of mind, and the ancient commentators noted the similarity. We have no occasion to follow Philargyrius in his

efforts to uncover the personality of the shepherds, but it may be noted that he saw the evidence of the controversies and rivalries of Antonians and Octavians. Since these controversies disappear in Eclogues like the fourth, eighth, and tenth, all written later then the Perusine War, after which the Antonians dispersed, we find additional justification in placing this Eclogue in the company of the third.

In this kind of *vers de société* we can never hope to recover every allusion, but a few inferences may be suggested. Virgil has taken the usual pains to avoid any steady significance in proper names. Corydon is Virgil in the second but not in the seventh, else he could hardly have concluded with the line:

Ex illo Corydon Corydon est tempore nobis.

If we are to identify Virgil under any name it is more probably Meliboeus, the witness of the contest, who jests over his own bachelorhood in lines 14–15:

Quid facerem? Neque ego Alcippen nec Phyllida habebam
depulsos a lacte domi quae clauderet agnos.

Philargyrius suggests that Meliboeus is Virgil or Varus, and Daphnis Cornelius Gallus or Caesar. Thyrsis was thought to be Aemilius Macer and Codrus Helvius Cinna. To attach undue importance to these identifications would be only too easy, and yet they may have a certain significance. It is quite possible that our commentaries are late redactions of earlier and much superior material, or at least contain traces of theatrical traditions. To fix upon a single instance, it is hardly possible that the steady characterization of hostility towards Virgil and the Augustans on the part of Cornificius can be a baseless conjecture. His jealousy of Cinna is mentioned by Philargyrius on the authority of earlier scholars, and Asconius, who wrote on the detractors of Virgil, is quoted in the expanded commentary of Donatus as declaring that Virgil's success was to him unendurable.[1] Consequently it seems a reasonable position to take that both the Third and Seventh Eclogues belong to the period when the propaganda, both political and literary, was in full career, and this means before the

[1] Don. auct. 67.

termination of the Perusine War when Pollio and Varus were both maintaining their little courts in Cisalpine Gaul. Lastly, the two Eclogues are prefaced by no address, and may for this reason be thought to have been recited in person by the author before his patrons and their friends.

The sixth, on the other hand, is really a literary epistle, such as Horace at a later time developed into a genre. Virgil writes in the first person and addresses Varus by name. To think that such a composition was first presented in a private reading would be exceedingly strange, if not absurd, and the more so as it is obviously an answer to a written request of Varus for a poem upon his exploits. To look for some sort of metaphysical unity underlying these pretty paragraphs on Silenus with his story of genesis and Pasiphae and Scylla is a signal misdirection of effort. The aim and intention of Virgil is precisely the same as that of Horace in certain satires and epistles: he wishes to be understood and to have his talents appraised at their just value; consciously or unconsciously he is laying down the poetical principles of the new order; he is combating the republican tradition that would have made of him a mere Archias, a mere boarder and lodger in the halls of the great; he desires it to be known that the new poets are collaborators and not mere flute-players for the chief performers. He is asserting the independence of the poet. At the same time he insists upon the watchwords of the new school, sincerity and truth to self, whiteness.

The Sixth Eclogue was placed by the author at the head of the second group. Had he published two books he would have placed this on the first page of the second. This is a tribute to its importance, as we take it, not an indication of the date of composition. It is free from cross references and lacking in temporal allusions. Consequently we might locate it in the series according to any considerations that appear to be pertinent.

It is manifest from the opening lines of the piece that the flare that was caused by the success of the first Eclogues is already a thing of the past. The flounderings and wanderings of the poet have come to an end, and his feet have struck into the

path that is adapted to his gifts and talents. If he has not scaled the height of Parnassus, he at least feels at home by the streams of Permessus and is confident that now at last the muse has taken him by the hand. He knows his own mind and has appraised his own genius. He has received a Pythian oracle and knows the meaning of 'Know thyself'. He can look on his own past with detachment and has learned the importance of surrendering his will to Apollo. He knows that the muses cannot and will not be driven, that no one can force his way to Helicon. He must submit to leading. He has acquired a new peace of mind, a tranquillity such as he had not known even in the old days when he shook the dust of Rome from his feet and retired to the haven of Epicurus to live in cultured leisure, free from all worldly concerns.

The sixth is intimately autobiographical. In order that others may understand him he reveals himself. These pretty paragraphs are leaves, fluttering leaves, from a Neapolitan diary, Sibylline pages assembled at random, glimpses of scientific theory, stray stories of mythology, random bars of sweet music from favourite melodies, unfinished excursions of the fancy, glad confessions of precious friendships, affectionate recollections of poetical essays, a medley of harmonies that Apollo strummed by the streams of Eurotas and bade his laurel leaves to learn by heart.

The sixth resembles the *Culex* in affording us a summary of the poet's interests at the moment. His days have been spent with Lucretius and Theocritus, with Democritus and the erotic poets. The hope of writing epics he has renounced. With the gods he has come to an understanding. He will not be an Archias. Varus must look to others to write of cruel wars.

It may be noted that one must be on his guard against supposing this Eclogue to have been addressed to Quintilius Varus, who lived at Naples with Virgil in the Epicurean fraternity and was conversant with all his studies and interests. We must think of Alfenus Varus, to whom the poet felt bound to explain himself.

The ninth presents many difficulties. It contains a seeming reference to the fifth, but none to the rest. There is no reason

to infer that Pollio is the listener, and so we place it in the Varus group. This is consistent with its position in the collection among the later compositions, and also with the reference to earlier verses penned in his honour :

> Immo haec quae Varo necdum perfecta canebat :
> Vare, tuum nomen, superet modo Mantua nobis—
> Mantua, vae miserae nimium vicina Cremonae—
> cantantes sublime ferent ad sidera cycni !

This would imply that our Eclogue belongs to a time somewhat later than the period of suspense to which the drastic confiscations of Varus brought an end, that is, just before he became *consul suffectus* in the latter part of 39. Its collocation with the eighth, written before Pollio's triumph in October of that year, is in harmony with this conclusion. It looks back with a touch of relief, not without humour, to Virgil's conflict with the veterans, and so once more we seem justified in placing it late in the group. It begins without dedication, and so may be inferred to have been read in person on some social occasion. There is perhaps less sprightliness in its tone than we find elsewhere, and one might imagine it to have been composed from a sense of duty after the poet had seen the surveyor's rod plying in sight of Mantua and his own indemnity in cash had been reluctantly accepted in place of a portion of his beloved fields. The Servian commentary informs us that Cornelius, doubtless Cornelius Gallus, took Varus to task for his ruthlessness in winding up the confiscations,[1] and Virgil never mentions Varus again. For these reasons we may assume that Virgil's gratitude was easily measured. In none of the poems do we find a specific note of thanks. Like all citizens of the north country he had probably been mulcted of a heavy tribute before his lands were taken, and the memory of the misery and suspense must have crystallized into a painful regret. The estate that he left at death, consisting of less than a million sesterces, and that, no doubt, augmented by frugality, does not point to the receipt of any adequate remuneration for sixty allotments comprising fields, pastures, orchards, vineyards, and forest, and so we are driven to the conclusion that Virgil conducted himself with

[1] To *Ecl.* ix. 10.

manly moderation. To expect him to have been extraordinarily grateful is quite beyond reason. Hence the lukewarmness of the ninth and the absence of specific tributes of gratitude throughout.

The question arises in connexion with the ninth of the identity of the poems by merit of which the poet secured a partial exemption of his lands. Since Octavianus only returned from Greece in January, 41, the presentation of the petition must fall, at the earliest, in the winter of this year, when not a single Eclogue need have been written, even if we accept the statement of the commentators, which goes back to the dependable Asconius, that he began them in his twenty-eighth year. The Fourth Eclogue is automatically eliminated, and the fifth, the prolusion of the fourth, following the fall of Perusia, adheres to it just as it follows it in the arrangement. The first, with its references to the drastic measures of Varus and the final enfranchisement of Gaul, which only became effective after Perusia, must also be set aside. The second and third, which belong to the Pollio group, even if composed before January, 41, could only have been used through the intervention of an Antonian partisan. We thus are almost forced to fall back upon the earlier poems, the youthful *Culex*, the epigrams against Antony and his lieutenants, and the *Sic vos non vobis* of the year 44. We ourselves believe that Virgil stood upon his own feet and claimed exemption as a consistent Caesarian. We claim for him a greater strength of character and a higher place in the contentions of the times than has yet been admitted.

There is, of course, no Gallus group in the *Eclogues*, and this fact invites us to enlightening conclusions. You cannot measure the warmth of Virgil's friendships by the number of his dedications. His most intimate friends were Varius, Tucca, and Quintilius Varus, and to them he dedicated nothing that remains, unless one takes into account the slight epigrams in the *Catalepton* addressed to the former two. The two little poems in elegiacs that contain the name of Octavius Musa bear evidence of an unfeigned warmth of feeling that gradually cooled when the object of his affection fell from the high standard of character exacted by the circle in which he moved.

Of the poet Horace, although we have unimpeachable information that Virgil introduced him to Maecenas and thereby nominated him to membership in the new society, there is not so much as a slight mention. Yet how absurd would be the assumption that the attachment existing between them was not of a singularly frank and affectionate nature? Asconius is authority for the statement that none but a cross-grained person could fail to become a lover as well as a friend of Virgil.[1] Yet none of these friends are named in his verses. Horace names a multitude of friends. Had Virgil fewer? We should suspect that he had even more.

In the light of these facts what conclusion are we to draw from the groups of poems addressed to Pollio and Alfenus Varus? It can only be this, that for the sake of his lands and his devotion to his youthful leader he sacrificed his love of seclusion and tranquillity to pay court to men who for the moment had it in their power to render him indispensable assistance, and at the same time were inclined to follow his adversary. It does not follow that Pollio and Varus really possessed or came to possess a pre-eminent place in his affections. Had this been so he might easily have found occasion in the *Georgics*, if not in the *Aeneid*, to enshrine the name of Pollio in one immortal line. But it was not to be. We hesitate to believe that Pollio, in spite of his abilities, was really of such a disposition as to qualify for genuine membership in the Augustan circle. He was born a trifle too soon to become a friend in the true Epicurean significance of that word, and his personal ambitions were shaped in the mould of the society that was overthrown. By temperament or by training, we should judge by his ungenerous criticisms of contemporaries, he was not quick to praise nor liberal in estimating talent. To Virgil, whom Asconius declares to have been singularly free from envy, such a one could never have been completely congenial, and in spite of the Pollio group of Eclogues we should shrink from classifying him as other than a transient benefactor. Alfenus Varus we should place in the same category and on a lower plane.

[1] Don. auct. 65.

The poem he willingly penned for the sake of Cornelius Gallus, after the era of propaganda was passed and the series of Eclogues closed, differs from the rest in being a sheer tribute of affection without ulterior motives. It stands alone in the body of Virgil's compositions, whether of the minor or major corpus. The only thing comparable to it is the brief pair of elegiacs to Octavius Musa, but Virgil never wrote elegiacs for publication and so the Tenth Eclogue really stands quite by itself. Virgil was essentially sincere and no one who understands him rightly can fail to perceive from the evidence of his own words that Gallus stood on a different footing from Pollio and Varus. To them he plays the courtier, turns the not unmerited but somewhat conventional compliment, but never really lays bare his heart. The place of Gallus in his affections is rather comparable to that of Maecenas and it was he that shared the honour of the *Georgics* in the original draft. At the feet of Octavianus Virgil lays homage as spontaneous as the tributes of affection to Gallus and Maecenas, and it was not unmixed with a sentiment more tender, but his homage is akin to worship, sincere worship, which displaces friendship. The real friends of his fireside seem to have been Varius, Tucca, and Quintilius Varus, and the poet Horace.

CHAPTER XIV

HIC GRAVE SERVITIUM

For the sake of reaffirming certain traits of the poet's character and also to re-enforce our characterization of the whole minor corpus it is convenient to discuss the third poem of the *Catalepton*, a true epigram presumed to have been attached to the pedestal of a statue of some conspicuous man standing in the city of Rome, a custom that prevailed in ancient times and long survived in Italy. In form and compass the piece is singularly like a sonnet, ending in an aphorism.

Aspice quem valido subnixum gloria regno
altius et caeli sedibus extulerat.
Terrarum hic bello magnum concusserat orbem,
hic reges Asiae fregerat, hic populos,
hic grave servitium tibi iam, tibi, Roma, ferebat,
cetera namque viri cuspide conciderant,
cum subito in medio rerum certamine praeceps
corruit, e patria pulsus in exilium.
Tale deae numen, tali mortalia nutu
fallax momento temporis hora dedit.

Because of the fiction that the verses were affixed to a monument the subject remains unnamed and various identifications have been proposed, such as Phraates, Alexander, Mithradates, Pompey, or Antony. To all foreign names may be urged as an objection the singular and consistent concentration of the poet's interests in Rome and Italy. All exercises of the class-room seem to have been sedulously destroyed and only those pieces preserved that sprang from some personal reaction to friendship, loyalty, enmity, or to some crisis in his career. To assume that this epigram was of the nature of a school-room task would amount to bestowing upon it a unique place among the minor poems. All other surviving pieces are distinctly

biographical and possess positive value as fragments of the author's memorabilia. He preserved only the landmarks of his progress.

Since neither Phraates nor Alexander seems to have found adherents we may leave them to one side, but against the claims of Mithradates vital objections must be urged. Chief of these is the fact that the power of the Pontic king did not suddenly collapse as the epigram demands, in the middle of a struggle, but after a series of long and tedious wars conducted by one distinguished general after another. The amazing feature of his career was not the suddenness of its termination but rather the long postponement of his defeat. Fortune stood steadily by him until his name was exalted above that of Hannibal, Pyrrhus, or Antiochus. Moreover, he lived beyond the limit of three-score years and ten, when catastrophe is ascribed to Nemesis rather than to Fortune. Lastly, our epigram does not speak of a king, but one who, like Antony, placed his dependence upon a kingdom.

The interest must lie nearer to Rome and concern a person whose statue stood in the capital, one whose career was followed with the eye, not with the memory and imagination alone, which eliminates all but Antony and Pompey. Antony is the man. As Julius Caesar feared and hated only Cato so the kindly Virgil feared and hated only Antony. We would synchronize the poem with the ode of Horace on Cleopatra:

Antehac nefas depromere Caecubum
cellis avitis dum Capitolio
regina dementis ruinas,
funus et imperio parabat.

Note the fifth line of the epigram:

Hic grave servitium tibi iam, tibi, Roma, ferebat.

This can hardly apply to Pompey though it aptly fits the case of Antony, whom Horace, writing for publication, prefers not to name. If it be objected that Antony was not an exile in any technical sense we reply that this is poetry, not prose. Down to the days preceding Actium he stood on the same footing as Octavianus and possessed the right to return to Italy at

any time. After Actium he could not do so. He was an exile far more than the poet of the *Dirae*. Recall lines 84–5 :

> Exsul ego indamnatus egens mea rura reliqui,
> miles ut accipiat funesti praemia belli.

The diction of poetry is not the diction of prose.

Against the name of Pompey one may press the objection that with all his glory he was never elevated to the ranks of the gods, as the second line of the epigram requires :

> Aspice quem valido subnixum gloria regno
> altius et caeli sedibus extulerat.

Neither had he a kingdom upon which to fall back ; in Egypt he arrived as a suppliant. On the other hand the power of Antony, which consisted primarily in the possession of Egypt, is at once guardedly and accurately denoted in the words of our text. Moreover, Antony had not only paraded as Bacchus and as Hercules but had also assumed the divine prerogatives of an Egyptian monarch ; quite aptly the poet might say of him that glory had exalted him to the ranks of the gods.[1] To these specific considerations may be added the fact of the poet's lasting and consistent detestation of this overbearing roisterer, beginning from the days following Pharsalus when Caesar was disgraced and the feelings of all decent Italians were outraged by the heedless rapacity and shameless debauchery of the master of horse. Of these orgies Virgil was an eyewitness, which Cicero was not. May we not then imagine his disgust and resentment to have been more bitter ? The thirteenth of the *Catalepton* antecedes all *Philippics*. Virgil was a foremost anti-Antonian ; he was against Antony when he flaunted the claims of the young Octavius, against his lieutenants, Tillius Cimber and Ventidius Bassus, when they were elevated to office, against the Antonian poetasters Anser, Bavius, and Maevius in the turbulent year of Perusia. He gave his soul free fling in the Messianic Eclogue when the Antonians left Italy in the year 40.

Under these circumstances, having preserved among his private papers the record of a long hostility, it was but natural

[1] See *Amer. Jour. of Phil.* xxxiii, p. 322.

that he should close the series. Therefore he added a brief page to his diary, a mediocre thing intended for no eyes but his own. There was no rancour. The just cause had won and the partisan could afford to be generous. Treacherous time had dealt his dreaded enemy a mortal blow. The Antony epigram marks the turning of a page in the troubled career of the poet just as the picture of Actium on the shield of Aeneas marks the close of a chapter in the history of Rome and the Caesars. Virgil made two records, a paltry one for himself, a magnificent one for posterity. The minor corpus of his works was for himself, the major corpus for the world.

We feel that the interpretation of this little poem, slight as it really is, constitutes a test case for the characterization of the whole corpus of the minor Virgilian poems. If the subject is either Mithradates or Pompey then this minor corpus is not the unity that we believe it. What we would prove is this, that Virgil was more of a man, more of a patriot, more of a prophet, and more of a poet than we have thought. We would ascribe to him a steadfast loyalty to a cause that existed chiefly in his own mind until the driving force of Fate after the lapse of many years had brought it to fulfilment in the Empire. We believe that he cherished it and preached it until he made his interpretation acceptable to the young Caesar and to a majority of mankind. We believe that he inspired Octavianus more than Octavianus inspired him. We see in the minor corpus of his works the pieces that were chosen by himself out of a larger body of less significant material as the justification of his early dreams. If there is mere exoteric stuff in it, stale exercises on scholastic themes ; if the Octavius of the *Culex* is Octavius Musa, who sacrificed himself to Bacchus ; if the subject of the epigram in question here is a foreign potentate or even Pompey ; if the subject of the Noctuinus pieces is not Antony, then the unity of the minor corpus is wrecked and Virgil is less of a man, less of a patriot, less of a prophet, less of a poet than we hoped. He is reduced to the status of a literary adventurer who by good fortune at last lit upon his feet. The inveterate habit of detraction, from which we can scarcely emancipate ourselves, would have it so.

What do we find in the minor corpus? Little mementoes of his beloved Tucca and Varius, pretty pastorals of a Neapolitan roadside, like the *Copa* and *Moretum*, bitter lampoons against the man that brought shame upon himself and disgrace upon Caesar, lines to Siro's villa voicing pathetic anxiety for a sightless father, sallies of satire against the muleteer praetor and the outlandish Atticist, whose bad Greek was deadly as poison, tributes to his fellow student and fellow townsman Octavius Musa, a gleeful farewell to the Forum, the scented dandies and the bookworm tribe, all mingled in bewildering disarray. The *Culex* we must not forget, first heir of his invention, nor the *Ciris*, relic of an abortive friendship, nor the *Aetna*, a frustrated ascent of the eminence of science, nor the *Dirae*, his kicking against the pricks, nor the much misunderstood *Lydia*, an elegy for the Lydian Mincius, nor the pathetic prayer for continuance of life until the name of Aeneas should ring from city to city in verses worthy of the theme. Is there anything idle or meaningless in the whole series? It is sheer autobiography, the naked milestones of an arduous itinerary.

Who was the moving spirit of the Augustan circle? Was it Horace, who fought for Brutus and Cassius on the battle-field of Philippi, or Virgil, who plunged into the frays of Cisalpine Gaul and plied his pen among the adherents of Antony in the interests of a leader who had not arrived at a realization of his power of service? Was it the author of the Sixteenth Epode, who discerned no glimmer of dawn on a dark horizon and found in the storied past but the desperate example of the exiled Phocaeans, or was it the poet of the Daphnis Eclogue trying his melodies upon a hesitating generation until he should feel it timely to burst into the full song of the Messianic prophecy? Was the seer of the new time the humble clerk of the treasury, or was it the stalwart man of the North who had wrestled with the veterans to save his beloved lands, who, when opportunity came, had spirit enough to tell the young Caesar to his face of the criminal injustice of an evil system? Did Virgil introduce to Maecenas the moving spirit of the coming age? Was it not rather the social secretary of the nascent court that he discovered, the man of a thousand friends,

who with innumerable dedications maintained an exquisite propaganda of publicity for the new régime, who performed the indispensable service of keeping the public in perpetual mind of the new ideals of manners and morals, of the new principles of poesy? Is this able and gifted agent a convert to the new order or a founder? Has he any claim to be called the originator of the Augustan criticism? He is only its spokesman. In the background is the Neapolitan circle to which he never belonged, Varius, the strict tragedian, Quintilius Varus, veteran of the Catullan age and merciless judge of diction, the candid Tucca, and greatest of all, Publius Vergilius Maro, a courageous man, a consistent patriot, a seer, and a prophet, who dared more than the rest, saw farther than the rest, gave vision to his chief and founded the new order in the imaginations of men. Only now is he coming into his own.

CHAPTER XV

LAST WORDS

VIRGIL'S health was never good after his discharge from the army and the fear haunted him that the composition of an epic was a task too great for his strength, that he might never live to see it finished. We know his anxiety from the fragment of the letter to Augustus, from the clause in his will which guarded against the publication of any work that he had not himself released, and from the narrative of his last illness. During his last years, after the construction of the Via Puteolana and the access of fame had robbed him of all privacy in the old harbour town of Parthenope, he appears to have lived on the more retired peninsula of Sorrento, where Augustus himself had a villa in addition to his adjacent retreats of Capri and Apragopolis. Thus we understand the association of the name of Caesar with the Sorrentine shore that we find in the last lines of the vow that the poet recorded before his last journey. The epigram closes the collection of the *Catalepton* and is full of the feeling of apprehension that his beloved master may be cheated by death of the crowning tribute to the greatness of his achievements.

Si mihi susceptum fuerit decurrere munus,
O Paphon, O sedes quae colis Idalias,
Troius Aeneas Romana per oppida digno
iam tandem ut tecum carmine vectus eat;
non ego ture modo aut picta tua templa tabella
ornabo et puris serta feram manibus.
Corniger hos aries humilis et maxima taurus
victima sacrato sparget honore focos,
marmoreusque tibi aut mille coloribus ales
in morem picta stabit Amor pharetra.
Adsis, O Cytherea: tuus te Caesar Olympo
et Surrentini litoris ara vocat.

'If I shall finish the course that is set before me, Queen of Paphus and Idalium, and the day shall come at last when, linked with thine, the name of Trojan Aeneas shall ring from city to city in verses worthy of the theme, I vow that not with simple incense or a painted picture shall I do honour to your courts, nor bring mere garlands in pure hands. These lowly altars a great ram and a giant bullock shall sprinkle with their sacred blood and for thy favour a marble Eros shall stand forth, or, it may be, in modish guise with painted quiver and iridescent wings of countless hues. Vouchsafe thy aid, Cytherea; thy Caesar calls thee from Olympus, and the altar on Sorrento's shore.'

After a visit to Sorrento, which occupies the same site as the primitive city, one can readily revive in his imagination the ancient surroundings. The population was Greek and one is delighted to find such names as Moeris, Daphne, and Achelous [1] upon stones in the local museum; the industry was also Greek in character, the making of fine pottery, which ranked with the pretty wares of Arretium. Of the existence here of a lonely imperial villa we are reminded by the incident of Agrippa's banishment, by a long series of imperial inscriptions,[2] and by the local name of Cesarano. This retreat must have been to the infirm health of Virgil what the Sabine property was to Horace. That it was the gift of Augustus is fairly certain from the content of Virgil's will. We have pointed out that he possessed four villas, at Rome, Nola, Parthenope, and Sorrento respectively, and at his death he named Augustus as heir to one-fourth of his estate, which would seem to mean that he returned to him this home of his later years. It was doubtless here that he worked upon the *Aeneid*, as the prayer to Venus indicates, and it was doubtless from here that he set out upon his final journey to the East, taking a long fond look, not without dark forebodings, of the pleasant bay and the rocks of the Sirens.

We can picture to ourselves the local sanctuary of Venus, a quaint and ancient precinct with a humble altar and rude images. Hither would come, as we glean from the epigram, the peasant with simple offerings of incense or garlands of flowers, or the rough sailor and fisherman with a wooden tablet

[1] *CIL.* X. 713, 740. One finds a sepulchral inscription of Valerius Eros, No. 753; Virgil had a half-brother Valerius, his heir, and a slave Eros.
[2] 675–8 and 691–712.

to commemorate his salvation. We can picture to ourselves the dark interior of the cella decked with these simple memorials of gratitude. It was a municipal worship, as inscriptions prove, combining the worship of Venus with Ceres, which points to Campanian influence. Below the site of the temple was once found a marble Eros, three feet high, and we might wonder if Augustus himself, who must have read the vow of the poet, was moved to carry out his last desires, for even if the *Aeneid* was not finished to its author's liking, nevertheless, Venus did come down from Olympus and the name of Trojan Aeneas re-echoed from city to city in verses worthy of the theme. The fates were kind to Virgil and the fates were cruel, and it was their choice that to the charm of the ample conceptions of that poem, to its exquisite details and its magical language, there should be added the ineffable pathos of the unfinished labour.

Both versions of Donatus, and the *Vitae* of Servius, Philargyrius, and Paulus assert that he dictated his own epitaph :

> Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc
> Parthenope ; cecini pascua, rura, duces.

The tenor of it is harmonious with the postscript to the *Georgics* and the opening lines of the *Aeneid* that were amputated by his executors.[1] Noticeable is the exclusion of the name of Rome, where he had never been happy. Mantua he always loved but Naples was his preferred retreat. He had fought a good fight, he had kept the faith. He had always cherished the same political ideals and hated the same enemies. Whenever he was permitted he had stood by the side of the leaders of his choice. He had more singleness of devotion, greater purity of mind, more courage, more foresight, and a profounder desire to be of service than his contemporaries. He served a long and discouraging probation and by undaunted persistence convinced the young Caesar of his capacity for usefulness. He contributed more than he received. He could not command men but he could guide their imaginations. He sacrificed his private tastes to public needs. He was not overcome by a distracting environment nor misled by small ambitions. He discerned the rising of new stars and pointed them

[1] See ' Virgil's Copyright ' in *Class. Phil.* xvi.

out to his fellows. He was the first and the greatest Augustan. Without him there would have been no Augustan age of literature. He established for himself a principate more lasting than that of the Caesars.

By the year 40, when his reception as the poet of the nascent court was solemnized by the presentation of the First Eclogue, the frail bark of his fortunes had run the rapids, survived the most arduous portages, and glided into the more placid waters of a hard-earned prosperity. His enemies are scattered and his friends abound. Yet there was apprehension and anxiety until Antony, the fear and detestation of his youth, was finally thrown down, and in the meanwhile he could not rest upon his worthy laurels. The world was in need of propaganda and, though the still small voice of science called him to retirement and contemplation, nevertheless, he must consecrate himself to the production of a work that should crystallize the sentiment of Italy and the West against the barbaric East. Actium itself did not terminate, but only punctuated, his labours. The new order required a new evangelism, and the principate, which Asconius tells us was the poet's own conception and ideal, must be established in the imaginations of men no less than in their institutions. The past, the present, and the future must be married in the thought of mankind, and the name of Trojan Aeneas must ring from city to city in verses worthy of the theme. ' Pereat qui crastina curat ' is the antithesis of his thought. His whole care is for the morrow, but death plucks him by the ear and says, ' Venio '.

In the dreaded month of September in the fifty-second year of his age, when intellectual men are at the summit of their powers, he breathed his last in the useless comfort of an imperial villa at Brundisium. The first and greatest of the Roman Emperors was beside him in his last hours, stood mournfully by the blazing pyre, and with naked feet shared in the melancholy privilege of collecting the pitiful remains. From Brundisium the imperial cortège pursued its tedious way along the ancient road that led to Campania, and in the modest tomb erected for his beloved parents not far from the quaint memorial of the Siren Parthenope they left another urn, while a white soul took flight to Elysian fields.

CHAPTER XVI

VIRGIL, THE ROMANTICIST

THE last two centuries before Christ were of the profoundest consequence in the spiritual and political history of the western world. They witnessed the consummation of civilization in the Mediterranean basin. Looking back upon ancient history from the advantageous distance of two thousand years we may clearly discern the main direction of events and map out the lines of movement. To reduce to a uniform level of culture the motley races surrounding that inland sea was a long and tedious process, extending not over centuries of time alone, but over untold thousands of years. The first stage was an era of commercial exploitation emanating from cities like Ephesus, Tyre, and Sidon, stepping gingerly from island to island or creeping from coast to coast until at last there was to be found no inhabitable shore from Asia to the Pillars of Hercules but was dotted with towns and factories. Next ensued an epoch of racial substitution along with political consolidation that moved slowly but surely westward in the wake of primitive commerce until these fertile shores were dotted at last, not only with cultivated lands, olive orchards, and vineyards, but also empires, kingdoms, and republics. Lastly came the struggle for political and economic mastery fought out in a series of gigantic and protracted duels, first between the kingdoms of the Nile and the kingdoms of the Euphrates, then between the Persians and the Greeks, and lastly and finally, between Rome and Carthage.

When Rome had crushed her competitor in the West, by the logic of events, the task of 'mopping up' the East was forced upon her, though long delayed by sentimental admiration for Greece, by nameless fears of distant Powers, and ignorance of her own capacity, but, once begun, the work went heedlessly on with little thought of where it would ultimately end or how it would react upon the young republic. A single battle shattered the fame of the Macedonian phalanx, and ere

long the measured tramp of the legionaries was heard for the first time in the hoary cities of Asia. The Seleucid kingdom fell like a house of cards. Attalus of Pergamum forestalled the inevitable by bequeathing his kingdom to Rome. In the next century the pride and genius of Mithradates was humbled in the dust and a Roman general traversed the Orient disposing of crowns and principalities according to the dictates of his own judgement and preference. Shortly afterwards an obscure Roman crossed over from Syria and restored the king of his choice to the ancient throne of the Pharaohs. Such events make it manifest that the star of the East was setting and the star of the West was rising, that the political centre of gravity was shifting and civilization leaving its ancient seat for ever, but the minds of the Romans were as the minds of children. How could they know that the last stage in Mediterranean culture was at hand, that their mission and function was to crown and close a great chapter in the ascent of man, to consolidate the civilization of that inland sea in preparation for the greater thrust into central Europe in the centuries to come? Prophecy was not cultivated in Rome.

The triumph of Roman arms was accompanied by the revival of every local patriotism and the resurgence of the postponed hopes of generation after generation. When Flamininus, the conqueror of Philip of Macedon, proclaimed the liberty of the Greeks at the Isthmian games he was almost crushed to death by the congratulations of the new-born freedmen, who, elated by the hope of the right of self-determination, set at once about the idle task of matching the number of their cities with the number of their toy States. In Africa the ambition of Jugurtha perceived the time to be ripe for the restoration of a kingdom. In the next century Mithradates of Pontus conceived the aim of building up a northern empire in Asia and all but succeeded in his ambition. In concert with his plans we witness a great nationalistic movement breaking out in Spain at the opposite end of the world. It is in Palestine, however, that this desire of the right of self-determination finds its most perfect expression. The lofty predictions of Isaiah are in these centuries crystallized and vulgarized into concrete

hopes of a Messiah, a powerful king who should crush his enemies and save his people. In a sense the Jew, while speaking for himself alone, was speaking for all mankind, was offering to all men the common expression of a common aspiration. Prophecy was his birthright, and as he gave to the men of the western world a religion so his feeling of the need of a new religion may stand for their feeling of their need.

The time was soon to come when the victorious Romans themselves, legion pitted against legion, citizen against citizen, neighbour against neighbour, should arrive at the same pitch of misery as the Greek and the Jew, at the same degree of disappointment and frustration. Beginning with the Gracchan troubles of the last quarter of the second century, Rome saw generation after generation go to its grave in internecine strife. The sacredest bonds of society were annulled. The streets of the capital ran with the blood of the sons of men who had made the name of Rome a name of power. Slaves betrayed masters, friend betrayed friend, brother betrayed brother. The living devoured the wealth of the dead and slew them to secure it. The proscriptions of Marius and Sulla filled the hearts of honest men with dread and despair. The conspiracy of Catiline reminded them of the insecurity of their security. The civil wars of Pompey and Caesar and then of Antony, Octavianus, and the tyrannicides, seemed threatening to rob the Roman of the hope of the fulfilment of any permanent political usefulness, and to thrust upon him the same humiliation as the Greek and the Jew had come to endure. Self-defeated and self-frustrated, he seemed ready to sit down by the waters of his Babylon and weep.

Thus we recognize an age when all men shared a common experience. Every race had met with defeat and disappointment, conquerors and conquered alike. Greeks, Jews, Asiatics, Egyptians, Numidians, the Spaniards and Sertorius, in Italy the allies of Rome and the Spartacans had all alike gone down in the general catastrophe. Even the Gauls had seen the long independence of an unknown past irrevocably wrested from them in a series of coldly calculated and relentless campaigns. Nor did Rome, which could master her foes but not herself, escape the universal levelling. Victors and vanquished, all

were in despair and consequently all began to feel about for something to which they might look forward. Hope and despair, by some strange law of our being, like laughter and tears, lie close together. When faith in the present fails us we seek for grounds of faith in the future. When cherished and trusted institutions collapse new institutions must be discovered for us to cherish and trust. In this age it was Jesus of Nazareth that came forward to save men from despair, to discover new grounds of hope, to point the way to an unsuspected paradise, to reveal new possibilities of human experience, to offer a new goal and a new end of human endeavour, to reveal unheard-of sanctions of conduct.

Yet Jesus was not alone. Behind him stretched a long succession of prophets, both true and false. In his own age he was surrounded by prophets. He was born and raised in an atmosphere of prophecy. With this apocalyptic mood the other nations were not utterly out of touch, and all roads led to Rome and the provinces. Scipio found the Roman camp in Spain in the second century infested by fortune-tellers.[1] Somewhat earlier in the same century the elder Cato[2] warns the proprietors of country estates against the mischief caused among their stewards by the Chaldeans, and if the Chaldeans were in the country districts separating poor men from their pennies, we may be sure that the *élite* of their profession pursued a more profitable traffic among the rich in the cities and in Rome in particular. Cicero tells us that Cornelius Lentulus, a Roman nobleman of the bluest blood, was induced to join the conspiracy of Catiline by the prediction of a Sibylline oracle which declared that a third Cornelius should become master of Rome.[3] This instance is especially important since it proves conclusively that Sibylline prophecies not embraced in the Capitoline collection were dealing specifically with Roman politics. Other examples are not lacking. In the year 57 B.C. the Roman Senate was gravely influenced by a Sibylline oracle forbidding military interference in Egypt.[4] Another oracle was circulated to the effect that none but a king could conquer Parthia,[5] which may possibly have hastened the assassination

[1] Appian, *Spanish Wars*, vi. 85. [2] *Agric.* v. 4. [3] *In Cat.* iii. 4.
[4] Cic. *Ad Fam.* i. 7, 4. [5] Suet. *Iulius*, 79.

of Caesar. Lastly, Suetonius tells us that Augustus ordered all collections of Sibylline oracles in private possession to be delivered to the authorities and burned in public,[1] which he would hardly have done unless they were known to contain an element of danger to the Government.

Our best authority, however, for the prevalence of prophetic literature dealing with Roman affairs is Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, commonly called the Messianic Eclogue because the early Christians believed they found in it a prediction of the birth of Christ. It specifically mentions the Cumaean Sibyl as prophesying the birth of a child who should usher in a new age of gold, a relatively sinless time that reminds us of the promises of the prophet Isaiah. The Eclogue is a joyous, rapturous prophecy, vibrant with the thrill of the first flight of a soul that has found itself. It lacks the stately depth and gravity of his later work, but it possesses a spontaneity, a buoyancy, an abandonment of self that he never again attained after the sober wisdom of mature years had replaced the exuberance of his tardy youth. At the present moment, however, it is not our wish to characterize or appraise it. We only wish to adduce it as evidence of the prevalence of prophetic literature and its authenticated bearing upon Roman politics. We wish to put forward conspicuously the manifest debt of Virgil to apocalyptic literature at the moment when for the first time he classified himself aright, found his becoming habitat, and struck into the path that he should travel during the remainder of his active life. This Messianic Eclogue is the first draft of the *Aeneid*.

Whether he knew the Jewish scriptures is uncertain but it is more than possible. The Jews may have been in Rome as early as the middle of the second century B. C. and were there in great numbers after Pompey's eastern campaigns; for he transported them thither and settled them across the Tiber. They attended a trial in large numbers in the Roman Forum in 62 B. C., as we know from Cicero who was counsel at the trial.[2] In Ovid's time the synagogue was a familiar institution.[3]

[1] *Aug.* 31. [2] *Pro Flacco*, 28.

[3] *Ars Amat.* i. 76.

Consequently the teaching of the Jews may have been familiar at an even earlier date. It must be remembered also that Horace is familiar with the Jewish Sabbath[1] and the Jew was then what he no longer is, an active proselytizer. We venture, therefore, to ask, how the knowledge of their doctrines could have escaped a man like Virgil who, we gather from his writings, was interested in every variety of learning and possessed a singular ability to dip into every path of human interest? How could a young man who studied for many years in the Roman Forum as an aspirant to the career of an orator have failed to hear and overhear the conversations of men who are by nature aggressive, and in those days were eager to make converts to their faith? Moreover, the Septuagint version of the Scriptures had been in existence for two centuries and would certainly circulate among the Roman Jews unless we assume that all of them spoke only Aramaic and Latin in an age when all men of learning or business read Greek as well. It is not to be forgotten that the Jewish prophecies would be classified in all likelihood as Sibylline literature, and this may account for the lack of specific mention of them in Roman writers, although this is not greatly to be wondered at in itself, since the Romans took singularly little interest in the foreign populations. Witness the paucity of mention of the Christians in the early Empire.

Yet even if the Orontes and the Nile were only beginning to empty their streams into the Tiber in those late republican days, we must recall that Virgil was certainly the pupil of the Epicurean Siro and possibly of Philodemus, both of them Orientals and the latter from Gadara of scriptural fame. In that pleasant Neapolitan society to which he retired before the murder of Julius it is scarcely possible that the apocalyptic whisperings could fail to circulate. Puteoli was near with all the streams of traffic constantly ebbing and flowing between the East and the West. Italy in those days and long afterwards was a better field for the Asiatic Greek than the well-worked dominions of Alexander, Antiochus, and Ptolemy. In Italy was the wealth and the luxury, the patronage of artist,

[1] *Sat.* i. 9, 69.

poet, sophist, and architect. The wars of Lucullus, Pompey, and Caesar had discovered the West to the East, and the names that come down to us, Siro, Philodemus, Parthenius, Pompilius Andronicus, are but the stray incidents of literary tradition. The whole coast of Campania, which saw its bloom in the first centuries of the Empire, must have teemed with multitudes of superstitious or religious Orientals of both high and low degree, and the oracle of Cumae must have driven a thriving trade. Virgil was here living in a Palestinian atmosphere. When he migrated from Rome to Naples he was headed upstream and meeting the future half-way; it was through Campania that the Orient was preparing to flow into Rome. Apocalypse, like the Scriptures, landed at Puteoli.

There is an element in Virgil, a vital and dominant element, for which we cannot supply the foot-notes. It is the contact with a spiritual mind outside of himself. It determines the form of his thought, it gives orientation to his vision, it sheds light in the darkness, replaces gloom by hope, and despair by faith. It saves him from the dust of pedantry, from the frigidity of Greek intellectualism. It leads him away from the wells that quench not the thirst. It almost transforms his piety to righteousness, it almost makes Christian charity of his human sympathy, it almost makes his faith in destiny to be a faith in God. It creates about him a sort of Christian twilight that attracted while it repelled the Christian fathers. It reveals to him the divine hand in the course of contemporary events, it opens up a new political landscape. Through it he comes into touch with that stream of influence that poured into Europe for centuries afterwards from the great fountain of spiritual thought—the East. It universalizes his thought and feeling. It adds prospect to retrospect, it welds into a unit the past, the present, and the future.

We have called the Messianic Eclogue the first draft of the *Aeneid*. We would invite particular attention to its prophetic form. Ever since the Romans had begun to write their own history, which was only a couple of centuries, they had consistently followed the indigenous method of the annalist or the philosophical method of Thucydides. Their eyes were steadily

turned to the rear. Cicero, who epitomizes the republican spirit, prided himself upon his foresight, which he quite lacked. In the fall of the Republic he sees nothing but dismal ruin. His ideals, even while he beholds them slipping away from him, are constituted in the past. They cannot find shape except in the forms of transmitted institutions. Virgil set out with exactly the same ideals, but the cataclysms through which his spirit was flung by the witness of vast calamities, combined with the glimpse of Oriental apocalypse, resulted in a complete spiritual revolution. He has turned his eyes with disgust, disappointment, and horror from the wrecks of republican ideals to the hope and expectation of a new order. He has lost faith in the past. He has found faith in the future. While all his fellow citizens have become superstitious, he has become religious. While the generation that surrounded his boyhood has become rationalistic, he has become spiritual. He has discovered the substance of things not seen.

This apocalyptic mood that found its first expression in the rapturous expectations of the Messianic Eclogue, the indisputable evidence of the working of the spirit of prophecy then sweeping over the Mediterranean world, takes more and more possession of the poet with the expansion of his knowledge, the growth of his reflection, and the deepening of his insight. It assumes final form and shape in the large and comprehensive prophecies of the *Aeneid*. The illusions of his youth, the mists and vapours of smouldering institutions, have suddenly dissolved and disclosed to his vision that what had seemed to be the sunset of civilization was really the sunrise of a new time. He has acquired the power of projecting his mind into the past and of flinging it into the future. He no longer looks back upon the beginning from the end, but he beholds the end from the beginning. He has found the thread that will lead him out of the labyrinth. He takes his stand in the dim prehistoric days and sees the past in the future. The Rome that he describes with the most singular effectiveness is the Rome before Rome when the hill of the Capitol was crowned with waving woods and the peaceful cattle browsed in the silent valley of the Forum. The din and the tragedy of Roman

streets have become things of the future. Virgil has been sitting at the feet of the Sibyl.

The extant Sibylline oracles are of Christian date, of low merit, and of less esteem. Scholars have stoutly denied that they can furnish us with any just ideas of what the Capitoline oracles really were. Yet they throw light upon Virgil's method, and it may well be that they bear no small resemblance to the spurious collections destroyed by order of Augustus less than a century earlier. They certainly deal specifically with Roman politics as we know the Virgilian sources must have done, and it may well be that scholars have not perceived their true significance. It is the practice of those who compiled them to place themselves at some remote point of time, the era of the exodus from Egypt, for example, and after foretelling certain recorded events to proceed to the prediction of other happenings that shall yet come to pass. Virgil is wiser, he strikes a grander note, and he refrains from personal and meticulous prophecies, but his method is notably similar. He takes his stand at the beginning of things and beholds all the greatness of Rome in a vision of the future. Jupiter is made to reveal to the assembled gods the vastness and power of the empire that is to be. Anchises in the Elysian fields discloses to Aeneas the honour roll of the great republic. The shield of Aeneas, made for him by Vulcan, is a veritable coat of arms for the distant empire. This, of course, is prophecy after the event, but it serves to throw the glamour of the unreal over the actual and to substitute for the sanguinary sunset of civilization, as it seemed to irreconcilable republicans, the splendour of a glorious sunrise. It constitutes a triumph of literary enterprise such as no retrospective classicism ever conceived. The dominant note is Oriental and the Oriental note in European literature has always been romantic.

The contact with apocalyptic literature makes a romanticist of Virgil, and it must be remarked in literary history how Western thought must of necessity be fructified from the Orient or become barren. The last century of the Roman Republic was not without learning. The truth is that it was excessively learned, For this learning Virgil conceived the most violent

distaste. 'I have nothing in common with the tribe of learning,' he declares. 'Farewell to the pedants,' he shouts in another place. The Roman had a singular aptitude for learning and a singular aptitude for desiccating it. He codified his religion into a body of ritual known as the *ius divinum* and lost the spirit of religion in the process. He codified his law. He adopted the coldest of philosophies—Stoicism. He became a rationalist in religion. Religious cults he regarded merely as useful institutions. He absorbed Alexandrian scholarship and criticism. He acquired a singular liking for etymological studies. He developed a passion for the study of grammar, the age of Cicero being absolutely under the heels of the grammarians. It is this tendency to formalize, to codify, to legislate, to write encyclopaedias that causes Virgil to exclaim, 'Farewell to the pedants.' He is in rebellion against republican pedantry, no less than against republican snobbery. Roman letters had gone barren and he knew it.

While Virgil was in rebellion against Roman Hellenism, which in the late republic had become an extreme intellectualism, a symptom of the drying up of the national life, he was drawn by some fortunate endowment of mind and soul and a happy violence of circumstance towards the composite, subconscious, spiritual and political experience of the common run of mankind. He is not an individualist. He is in touch with the common man in the mass. He feels the force of the spiritual influences that flowed from the Nile and the Orontes into the Tiber, and he feels no less the emergence of a new political sentiment so universal that the humblest freedman, artisan, or peasant may claim a share in it. His patriotism is no longer urban but Italic, and is not Italic only but imperial. It is of such a nature that the Gaul, the Spaniard, and the African may share it. It is the only sentiment that could dissolve and neutralize the local patriotisms and nationalistic aspirations that universally surged up in the age preceding him. His point of view is steadily provincial but not the provincialism of a tamely submissive citizen. It is the provincialism of one who demanded for himself the pleasure of being loyal, the right to a share in the responsibility of citizenship. His point of

view is steadily that of the allies of Rome in the Social War who rebelled against the selfish snobbery of a respectable nobility that had mistaken a decadent old city for an empire and haughtily claimed for themselves the exclusive right of feeling proud. They constituted a genuine oligarchy. The new imperial sentiment is democratic. It is the era of the common man, of the freedman, and of the middle classes. The new citizenship is not intellectual but it is patriotic ; it is hopeful, it has some real religious aspirations, and it formed the seed-bed of a really religious movement.

This new sentiment, this loyalty to the Empire, this trust of the Caesars, was the best comfort the age could afford. It could not satisfy men for ever. Yet it was not without a lofty side. It is a newborn faith in Roman institutions, a revival of faith in Roman gods. Above all, it is a faith in fate, not a blind fate but a provident and benevolent fate that from the first had ordained that Rome should rule, not for herself alone, nor yet for the sake of the patricians, but for the common good of men. They might have anticipated the words of Tennyson :

> Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
> From out the storied Past, and used
> Within the Present, but transfused
> Thro' future time by power of thought.

The new discovery of the age is faith and hope, and Virgil is chosen of the gods to set down the new creed for men, to fling the glamour of the divine over that storied past. He had not so planned. He had expected to be mastered by the classicism of Greece, to scale the citadel of science ; but he found that the muses cannot be coerced, and that he could no more control the form of his thought than the mother can control the form of the child that she bears. His own imagination, to his astonishment, will not obey him. His thoughts are born by subconscious effort and refuse to arrive in a shape that he can foresee. He maintains only a semi-control of his own fancy. He may have been amazed and puzzled by his own creation. He is a romanticist and not a classicist. He is the poet of surprises. Little did he himself realize to what vales the muses would lead him nor what beauties they would reveal.

To understand the prophet of the Augustan age one must study his antithesis, Cicero of Arpinum. Like almost all the great men of the last century of the republic, Marius, the Antonii, the Metelli, Crassus, Catulus, the Pisos, the Marcelli, the Cornelii, and the Bruti, he was born near the magic boundaries of Latium. The Latin he speaks has the urban accent, the prized urbanity, of which his compeers made a fetish. His toga has the correctest of folds, his sandals are of faultless style. He has fifteen homes in town and country filled with the literature and art of Greece, but at the same time the temples of the gods are tumbling to ruin. The priesthood of Jupiter has been vacant for decades. The Forum that rings with his eloquence is surrounded by homely buildings erected centuries before. The sewers are tumbling in. The streets have not been repaired for years. The aqueducts are leaking water in every rod of their extent, and much of what they do not lose of their contents is being stolen by Cicero's friends for their suburban villas. The houses of the poor are built of wood and sun-dried brick. Sometimes they collapse ; sometimes they burn, and no one cares except the landlords, and Cicero is a landlord. Common precautions against fires are neglected. Private owners are encroaching on the public street. No one heeds. It is a free country and freedom is sacred.

When Cicero in his perorations lifts up his hand and his voice to the templed hills and appeals to the most sacred sentiments of a populace that had lost all but the sentiment of religion, he knew very well, he could not help knowing that the priesthoods had fallen into neglect, that the holiest liturgies were passing into oblivion. He must have known that the government he champions stood squarely for class interests at the expense of general efficiency. How could he speak so and act so ? The answer is not difficult. He had given hostages to fame, to social position, and to respectability. He has been quaestor, aedile, and consul ; he has long sat in the Senate ; he is an augur. On state occasions he dons the toga praetexta, recites a formula that no longer means anything, like a tale of little meaning though the words are strong, and goes to his home with the satisfaction of the orthodox. The brilliant

poet Lucretius, fascinated by his learning, misled by his apparent interest in the deepest things of the mind, gives into his hands his great sceptical poem, *De Rerum Natura*, in which he essays with all the ardour of a Peter or a Paul to emancipate the souls of men from the thraldom of religion. But Cicero could not afford to be the sponsor of an unbeliever. There is no tyrant like an orthodox respectability.

Cicero's *Philippics* make splendid reading. His was the silver tongue; persuasion sat upon his lips; under the magic of his magnetic mind the willing words leap to their places in the phrase and race away like waters gliding over level rocks, placid yet moving with a swiftness that holds one spellbound; they rage and tumble and roar; they dash themselves into spray; they amaze, they astonish, they enchant the hearer. Never man spake as this man spake, but there is another side. There is a text between the lines that he who runs may read. Who are those senators whose sentiments are so noble, whose authority is so sacred, in whose wisdom and courage consists the hope of Rome? Once upon a time, when the accomplices of Catiline awaited their condemnation at the votes of that body, there was a Cato in it, there was a Caesar; it was filled with men whose imaged ancestors crowded their reception halls, but they and almost all that heard their accents are gone. Every man of them took flight when Caesar drew near to the city with the exception of a few so asthmatic with fat and hobbled with the gout that they could not flee. Into their places had come a horde of men from Gaul who could neither speak Latin nor find their way to the senate-house. Some came uninvited. Caesar admitted them by way of jest. This is the body that Cicero trusted to save Rome.

The age of Cicero has terrific limitations. It is a selfish, self-centred age. It is an age that made a fetish of urbanity. The urban accent, the urban polish, the urban dress became a fetish. It is a concentric age. It is not expansive. It is hypocritical, not sincere. Dignity is more to it than morality. It is negative and not positive. It dwells in its imagination upon the merit of being a Roman of Rome, and its Stoic talk of humanity and brotherhood is prattle. Its ideals are fixed

in the past, not in the future, and the ideals of the past are worn out. It knows exactly what it wants, and those who know exactly what they want in this life never receive revelation in art, politics, or religion. The composite life of humanity moves continually to new and unclassified, undefined, uncharted experiences. The swirling streams of thought out of which our institutions are born will not continue for ever to combine in the same way. The fragile usages, laws, religions, and rituals, the manners and morals out of which a complex civilization is compounded, are but the transient rainbows of the atom-streams. Men cannot stop them, check them, or create them. The race-consciousness, howsoever powerful it may have been, may be called upon to merge itself in an empire-consciousness, and even empire-consciousness will not endure for ever. The Roman of Rome, even Cicero of Arpinum, may rail at fate, may clutch in despair at the ideals of the past, may strive with every resource of his art to anchor a sailless and oarless ship but it drifts into the maelstrom just the same.

The old Roman was the lord of the earth, but he was subject to just the same laws as the rest of mankind. He kicked against the pricks, but he was called upon to give up his Rome in precisely the same way that Spartans must give up their Sparta, Athenians their Acropolis, Philip his Macedonia, Attalus his Pergamum, Mithradates his Pontus, the Jews their Jerusalem, Cleopatra her Egypt, Jugurtha his Numidia, and Sertorius his Spain. It is in such times as these, when the surface of things is heaving with waves of cosmic consequence, when the very poles of civilization are seeking for new seats, when the sea of time is strewn with the wrecks of thrones and principalities, when all the most venerated sanctions of human conduct lose their bond over the common run of kind, that the most eminent minds of the race are in danger of losing their orientation and their reason. Some, like Cicero, like the Scribes and Pharisees, clutch stubbornly at the fleeting past. Others drift wildly in the seething waters laying desperately hold of the wreckage, the transient safety of wrong leadership that may fail them any moment. Happy are they who first sight the new land, who glimpse the reappearing stars that look

on tempests and are never shaken. Such men are the statesmen and the prophets, emissaries of the gods, benefactors of mankind. Such was Virgil.

This Cicero of whom we have been speaking, whom we cannot but love, upon whose brow we willingly leave a wreath of laurel evergreen, was born too near to Rome, too near to the centre of things, where the movements of events are most violent and their direction concealed. The prophet of the new time, the rustic Virgil, whose toga refused to hang straight, whose sandals persisted in slipping their straps, who stammered and suffered in high society, came into this vale of tears by the grace of heaven nearer to the circumference of things. His birthplace was on the frontiers, beyond the pale of Roman citizenship, in the shadow of the towering Alps, the great barrier of barbarism, its hinterland seething with the chaotic forces of distant civilization, in muddy Gaul, as the Roman poet called it, where one would rather have expected to find a muleteer than a prophet or a seer. Of the pomp of courts he knew no more than did Abraham Lincoln. His outstanding qualities are sincerity and humanity. Of the superficial virtues of the capital, the Roman dignity, the Roman decorum, the Roman gloom, the urban fastidiousness, the senatorial snobbishness he is quite innocent, but of the old Roman reverence, the old Roman piety, the old Roman honesty, the old Roman righteousness he has a just appreciation. The tailors and the sandal-makers in muddy Gaul were rough craftsmen, perhaps, but a bit of old Rome survived up there, just as a bit of old Judea survived in the despised province of northern Galilee. Jesus Christ was not born in Jerusalem.

Virgil came down to Rome, a tall overgrown boy, full of the eagerness of youth, his mind receptive, capacious, and retentive, his heart impressionable, sympathetic, and unsoiled. He absorbed the Hellenism of the capital. He took his place at the feet of the rhetoricians and philosophers. He learned their definitions, classifications, figures of speech, and partitions of discourse, all the dry bones of the art. He studied and mastered their ethics and their physics. The swirling streams of atoms flying through space, the eclipses of the sun, the

regularity of the planets, none of these things remained secrets to him. He rummaged their bookcases from the first to the last cabinet. He went down under the earth with them and up into the flaming ether in their search for truth, and listened to their answers to the riddles of existence. He became a Stoic with the Stoics, an Epicurean with Epicurus, a Platonist with Plato. The Nile poured its richness at his feet. All ancient learning converges in him. The high and serious tone of tragedy broods over the *Aeneid* and the lyric and the elegy leave dainty footprints in his thought. The clear-toned pipes of the Sicilian shepherd echo softly between the lines. He is an epitome of all that was prettiest in Greece and Rome. He imitated no one and borrowed from all. His very style shimmers with gilded fragments gleaned from infinite reading and treasured by an iron memory. Yet his style is not a mosaic. The magician of Mantua has waved his wand and turned it all to gold.

His style is a proper image of his thought. He was a true Roman and took the spoils of the whole world to himself. His poems are adorned with the trophies of all lands. He has levied tribute of every province and all the precious plunder that he gathers from far and near is melted down and stamped with an image and superscription that fixes its ownership for ever. As all the roads and routes of antiquity met in Rome so all the lanes of literature converge in him. As the fluid sands gather and flow through the neck of the hour-glass and diverge again, so all antiquity converges to him and diverges from him. The whole chorus of the muses arises to do him honour. He has not seen Delphi alone nor the hill of Cecrops, nor Helicon, nor Parnassus. He has stood upon Ida and Berecynthus; he has been to Zion itself. He has drunk of the Pierian spring, the Castalian fount, of Hippocrene's fabled waters, and cool Siloam's shady rill. He has gone down into the pit and learned the jealous secrets of the universal mother. He knows the things that are, the things that have been, and the things that shall be.

What is more marvellous still, he epitomizes the future. His feet were guided into those paths in which the children of posterity were destined to travel in ages yet unborn. As all

roads and routes converged upon Rome, so all routes and roads diverged from Rome. Rome lay upon the crossroads of history and Virgil's mind is an image of Rome. The Christianity that placed there its Western capital found its prediction in him and yet his spirit had returned to the Elysian fields before the founder of Christianity saw the light of day. Virgil prepared the world for Christian virtues. He made ready the Latin word *fides* for its Christian denotation of *faith*. He discovered hope to a despairing world. His human sympathy foreshadows Christian charity. He wrote of the future life of the soul in terms that influenced Christian doctrine as powerfully as the Holy Scriptures themselves. His fervid zeal for scientific investigation, as evidenced in the *Aetna*, forestalls the ardour of its modern advocates. His sympathy with dumb creatures anticipates the tenderness of good Saint Francis of Assisi. His love of flowers finds a distant kinship with the poetry of the nineteenth century. The loftiness of his moral tone, contrasting strangely with a licentious age, his exaltation of piety, pagan though it was, his reverence for holy things, disarmed the hostility of the early Church and made him a text-book for all time to come. In the Middle Ages he ranked with the Bible. The literature of Europe radiates from him. On every count he ranks as a romanticist. He was denied an orthodox success. Against the Rome of his youth he had no choice but to revolt. He is of it and he epitomizes it, but he has not sold his soul. He is not mastered by his models, as the classicist is sure to be mastered, nor is he mastered by his teachers, as the classicist is sure to be mastered. In his nature one finds the Oriental strain and the Oriental strain in the European is steadily romantic. He is in subconscious contact with forces outside of himself, which tease and perplex him, perhaps, but will not set him free. In a certain sense he becomes a medium through whom the unknown comes into touch with the known. He appears to have been pursued and persecuted by a vague sense of disappointment and frustration as of one who strives to fling affectionate arms about an unsubstantial wraith that speaks and melts away even as it speaks. It is the past and the present yearning to have converse with the

future. He is often at his best when he nearly fails. His treatment of the passion of love is so modern, so human, so sympathetic that the story of Dido almost destroys the balance of his art and the due proportion of his poem. He speaks of love as a disease, as a madness, an infatuation, as something abnormal, little knowing that the result belies these tragic conventions and anticipates the romantic literature of Europe, in which the passion of love is not an abnormal but a normal experience. He approaches universality. He cannot be classified. He is a class by himself. What he accomplished, by its very nature, could never be accomplished the second time.

INDEX

Achelois, 68
Achelous, 67–8
Aemilius Macer, 139, 155
Aeneid, 16–17, 19, 25, 48, 51–2, 55, 61, 64, 75–6, 105, 116, 127, 160, 170, 176; i. 99; iii. 110; iv. 49, 51; v. 18; vi. 49, 75; viii. 76
Aetna, 38, 51, 75, 98 ff., 188; date of, 99–101, 107; and *Catalepton* v, 103–4; and *Ciris*, 104; and *Copa* and *Moretum*, 104
Aetna in eruption, 39, 103
Agrippa, 142; criticism of Virgil, 93 n. 3
Agrippa Postumus, 42
Alfenus Varus, 57, 60, 65, 86, 123–4, 145, 152 ff.
allegory in *Dirae*, 111; in *Lydia*, 116
altercations with veterans, 122, 134, 141, 158
ambitions, distracting, 27, 31, 50, 106
American West, 22, 83 ff., 113
Amphinomus and Anapias, 102
Amphion, 102 n. 1
anaphora, 52, 80–1, 88 ff.
Anser, 40, 87, 137
anti-Antonian, 30–1, 66, 77, 90–1, 163–4
Antonia, 29–30
Antonian party, 119, 123–4, 127, 129, 133, 136, 155; leaves Italy, 148–9
Antonius, Gaius, 28
Antony, 3, 21, 27 ff., 34, 137, 162 ff., 171; *cymbalon iuventutis*, 34; *flamen*, 90; his *superbia*, 133; see Noctuinus
Apion grammaticus, 34
Apocalypse, 178
Apragopolis, 40, 168
arbiter elegantiarum, 64
Archias, 156
Ariadne episode, 96
Ars Poetica, 65
Asconius, 16, 43, 63, 80, 87, 94, 101, 155, 159–60, 171
Atticism, 33–4, 77, 93–4
Atticus, 44, 85
audaxque iuventa, 145
Augustan circle, 12, 32, 39, 86–7, 141–2; founded by Virgil, 142; its moving spirit, 166–7
Ausonius, 93
Bathyllus, 88
Battarus = Bacchus, 111 ff., 125
Bavius, 40, 137, 148
Bern *Vita*, 24
Birt, 54–5
brothers, Virgil's, Intro. vi, 44, 81–2, 107, 148
Brutus, 30, 38
Brutus and Cassius, 119
cacozelia, Virgil's, 94 n. 3
Caelius, spendthrift, 135
Caesar Augustus, 12, 23, 40, 100, 119, 129; illness, 121; report of his death, 139–40
Caesar, Julius, 3, 28, 32, 58, 62; murder of, 36–7, 119; his will, 89; his divinity, 89, 91–2, 144
Calenus, 123
callida iunctura, 78
Calvus, 94
Campania, 40 ff., 70, 101, 178
candidus, a party colour, 138
canons, Augustan, 64
Capri, 40, 67, 168
Catalepton, i. 31 ff.; ii. 77, 93–4; iii. 163 ff.; iv. 159; v. 33 ff., 36, 39, 47, 77–8, 103–4; vi. 29 ff., 66; vii. 63 ff.; viii. 23, 37–8, 78, 107–8; ix. 54 ff.; x. 11, 94 ff.; xi. 159; xii. 29, 66; xiii. 21, 26 ff., 66, 164; xiv. 40, 168 ff.; general characterization, 165 ff.
Catullus, 5, 19, 32, 53, 62, 66, 80, 94, 95 ff., 111, 129; circle of, 64, 94
Chaldeans, 175
charm of Virgil's reading, 147
Cicero, 2, 8, 9, 23, 25, 27, 29, 36, 57, 93, 119, 179; *Pro Clu.* 6 n. 4, 10; *Philippics*, 29, 30, 34, 37, 92, 164, 184; *De Fin.* 38, 45; *Letters*, 41–2; his limitations, 183 ff.
Ciris, 25, 36, 37, 47 ff., 61–2, 64, 75, 78, 80, 99, 100, 110; style of, 52; and Dido tragedy, 49; and *Aetna*, 104
Cisalpine Gaul, 8, 9, 120; status of, 123; annexed, 146
class-room exercises, 162, 165
Codrus, 129, 155
confiscations, 112, 121, 142, 145
consistency of Virgil, 11, 17, 24–5, 91–2, 144–5, 159, 170–1
Copa, 37, 66 ff., 104
Cornelius Gallus, 48, 65, 123, 145, 153, 158, 161; collector of tribute, 120
Cornelius Lentulus, 175
Cornelius Severus, 98
Cornificius, 40, 87, 139, 149, 155
Cremona, 1, 4, 14, 16, 21, 37, 58, 107, 120, 131; market of, 14
cryptic names, 111, 114, 133
Culex, 10, 14, 15 ff., 24–5, 47, 49–52, 79, 90, 92, 110, 144, 157, 159
Cumae, 41–2, 178
cymbalon iuventutis, 34
Cytheris, 28, 30, 128
Dante, 10
death of Virgil, 171
début as a poet, 131, 154
Decimus Brutus, 120, 123
Democritus, 39, 157
description of battles, 27
detraction, 27, 31, 165
dimidiatus Vergilius, 52
Diphilus, tragedian, 129
Dirae, 13, 58, 110 ff., 125, 127, 132, 149–50, 164
distraction, 50, 101, 106
Dolabella, 29
dramatic technique, 64
Drances, 55
Dyrrhachium, 26, 32
Eclogues, 55–6, 75, 88–9, 104, 109–10, 113–4, 116, 129; i. 26, 36, 55–6, 73, 82, 122, 124–5, 127, 129, 137, 145 ff., 147, 171; ii. 132 ff.; iii. 134 ff., 154; iv. 70, 109, 123, 141 ff., 145, 176, 178–9; v. 11, 24, 110, 138 ff.; vi. 57, 156 ff.; vii. 55–6, 80, 154 ff.; viii. 147 ff.; ix. 13, 55–6, 157 ff.; x. 159 ff.; arrangement of, 152–3
elegiacs, 54
encounters with veterans, 122, 134, 141, 158
Epicureanism, 35, 36 ff., 84, 86, 126, 142
Epidius, 12, 24, 51
epitaph of Virgil, 170
epitomizes the future, 187–9
epitomizes the past, 187
erotic interests, 50
eschatological bias, 10, 15
ethical questioning, 75
Etruscophile, 11
evictions, 13
exemption of lands, 134; by merit of what verses, 159
facetiae, 129, 134, 136
facetus, 133 ff., 146
father of Virgil, 6, 9, 11, 21–2, 26, 44, 81–2, 95, 107; his blindness, 23, 44
Flaccus, Vergilius, 139, 148; see 'brothers of Virgil'
Flamininus, 173
fortune, Virgil's, 12, 44–5
friendliness, 33, 38, 85–6
friends, intimate, 161
fugitive allegory, 125 ff., 132, 134, 141, 151
Fulvia, 28, 30, 114, 119, 121–2, 133, 136
Galatea, 56, 124, 128
Gallicism, 2
Geese = Antonian poets, 137–8
Gellius, A., 44
Georgics, 8, 14, 16–17, 19, 25, 42–3, 68, 75–6, 80, 84, 104, 116, 160; i. 17, 68; iii. 18; iv. 16, 69, 78
Greek words, 52, 64, 100, 135
Hellenism, Augustan, 62
Helvius Cinna, 155
Homer's descriptions of battles, 27
Horace, 12, 38, 57, 63, 65, 156, 160, 166
houses and villas, 44–5, 107–8, 148, 168
ideal Epicurean, Virgil, 84–5
ill health, 21, 32, 168
indemnity for lands, 123, 153
Italic sentiment, Intro. v, 6–8, 181–2
Jesus, 175, 186
Jews in Rome, 176–7
learning, Republican, 180–1
Leonardo da Vinci, 101
letter to Augustus, 51
library of Virgil, 43, 63
Lincoln, Abraham, 5, 118, 186
Livy, 2, 5, 20, 67, 103
Lotos-Eaters, 126
love of flowers, 63, 79
love of knowledge, 101–2
love of money, 12, 44, 73
love of the country, 17, 78
Lucan, 57
Lucius Antonius, 114, 121–2, 136
Lucretius, 39, 53, 62, 101, 102, 157; and Cicero, 183–4
Lucullus, villas of, 41, 43, 82
Ludi Romani, 90
Lycoris, 128; see Cytheris
Lycurgus, Thracian, 111, 125
Lydia, 109, 114 ff., 125, 132, 136
Lydia, nymph of Mincius, 111, 140
Mackail, 75
Maecenas, 11, 65, 86–7, 94, 122, 142, 147, 160–1
Maevius, 40, 137, 149
Magian *gens*, 21
Mantua, 9 ff., 21, 145, 148
Mars and Venus, 117
Medea of Timomachus, 106, 107
Megara, 48
Messalla, 29, 36, 38, 48, 53 ff., 58, 59 ff.; oratory, 55; Greek bucolics, 55–6, 129; his son, 59
metamorphosis, 49, 51 ff.
military service, 18, 21, 26, 38, 168
Mincius, 5, 22, 111
Mithradates, 162 ff., 173, 185
molle atque facetum, 77, 93, 133 ff.
Moretum, 37, 71 ff., 104
mother of Virgil, 11, 21, 44, 107, 148
Mutina, 100
Naples, 29, 35, 36 ff., 67 ff., 107 ff., 170
Nettleship, 105
niger, a party colour, 138
Nisa = Lydia, 149
Nocte pluit tota, 87 ff.
Noctuinus, 29–30, 144
Nola, 44, 169
obscenity, 66, 80
Octavius, Virgil's cult of, 12, 23, 25, 32, 58, 90–2, 120, 143
Octavius Musa, 159, 161
Odi profanum vulgus, 57

Omnia vel medium fiant mare, 149–50
oratory, Roman, 60–1
Ovid not an Augustan, 51
palaeographers' errors, 115
parody, 34, 80, 95 ff.
Parthenias, 70, 128
Parthenius, 48
Parthenope, 7, 35, 42 ff., 63, 68, 168
patience, 85, 87
patrimony of Virgil, Intro. vi, 13, 83–4, 111, 113
patrons, 53
pedantry, 16 ff., 27, 105
periplus, 103
personal appearance, 6
Perusine War, 24, 37, 113, 123, 138, 145, 152, 156, 164
Pharsalus, 26, 30
Philargyrius, 29, 133, 154–5, 170
Philippi, 37, 108
Philodemus, 45, 177–8
Plancus, 123
Plato, 143, 187
poetry a duty, 104
Pollio, 65, 86, 120, 152–3; an Antonian, 123–4, 142; his court, 131 ff.; birthday, 135; son, 144, 149; his limitations, 160
Pompeius Strabo, 6, 10
Pompey, 14, 28, 129, 162 ff., 176
Pompilius Andronicus, 46, 178
Posidonius, 57
Posilipo, 40–1
poverty, affectation of, 13, 82 ff., 113
precocity, 19
Priapeans, 37, 63, 73, 78 ff., 88
Priapus, 66, 79–80
princeps poetarum, 53
principate, Virgil and the, 87, 171; gives advice, 91, 146
Probus, 13
pro-Caesarian sentiment, 9, 58, 91
propaganda, Antonian, 136
propaganda, literary, 136–7, 155, 166–7, 171
propagandist, Virgil as, 110, 142 ff.
proper names in *Eclogues*, 127 ff.
prophetic literature, 176
Publicola, 60
puer and *πόθος*, 63
Puteoli, 177
Quintilian, 5, 34, 93
Quintilius Varus, 38–9, 65, 77, 94, 141, 152–3, 157
racial extraction, 9 ff.
recitation, 129, 147
refrains, 116
reticence, 65, 110
Rome, 7, 21 ff., 25, 170; of Cicero, 183
Sallust, 5, 8, 28, 94
science, 39, 188
Scott, Sir Walter, 8
Sebethus, 67, 69
self-depreciation, 17, 49
self-parody, 81, 116
Selii, 34, 105, 127
Seneca, 98, 147
Septuagint, 177
sera libido, 117
serpents, 18
Sextus Clodius rhetor, 34–5, 128, 137
Sibylline oracles, 175–6, 180
Sic vos non vobis, 37, 80, 88 ff., 159
Sicily, 39, 40, 103
Siro, 39, 45, 177–8; villa of, 21, 37–8, 43–4, 107–8; school of, 39, 78
Social War, Intro. v, 6, 7, 10, 41, 182
Sorrento, 40 ff., 71, 168 ff.
Statius, 43, 45
Stoicism, 45–6, 85, 181
style, 19–20, 187; see Atticism
Suetonian catalogue, 47, 66, 72, 110, 114
Suetonius, 16–17, 40, 47, 81–2, 84, 98, 103, 114, 139, 147–8, 176
Swans = Octavian poets, 137–8
synagogue, 176
Tacitus, 3, 14
Tarquitius, 34, 105, 127
Tennyson, 71, 126, 182
theatre, 129, 133, 147, 155; function of, 129
Theocritus, 39, 71, 150, 157
Theophrastus, 77, 105
Tillius Cimber, 37, 77, 93, 145
tomb of Virgil, 44, 71
Transpadane sentiment, 6 ff.
Trinacria = Proserpina, 111
triumvirate, 38
Tucca, 21, 31, 38–9, 85, 141, 159
urbanitas, 2, 7, 183–4
Valerius Cato, 114
Valerius Proculus, 148
Varius, 38–9, 58, 63–4, 85, 100, 137–8, 141, 159
Varius and Tucca, executors, 54
Varius Cotylon, 29
Varro, 34, 105, 127
Ventidius Bassus, 37, 94 ff., 123–4, 128, 145
vers de société, 155
Via Puteolana, 41, 43, 44
visual observation, 76
Vitae of Paulus and Focas, 11
Vitae Vergilianae, Intro. v.
Vollmer, 72, 115
Volumnia, see Cytheris
wholesomeness, 20, 67
will, Virgil's, 44, 99, 168–9

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